AUGUST 1961

Commentary

THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY
Fundamentalism on the Right
Alan F. Westin

FOREVERMORE — A Story
S. Y. Agnon

THE GENIUS OF S. Y. AGNON
Robert Alter

DISARMAMENT VERSUS ARMS CONTROL
A Discussion of Criteria
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WHY STUDENTS LEAVE SCIENCE
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ALAN F. WESTIN

THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY

Fundamentalism on the Right

LAST APRIL, the Gallup Poll asked a nationwide sample of Americans whether they had heard of the John Birch Society and found that thirty-nine million persons—an extraordinary number, according to Gallup—had read or heard of the Birchers. Of these, 47 per cent had an unfavorable estimate of the Society, 8 per cent were favorable, and 45 per cent had not yet reached a judgment. In one sense, these figures suggest a firm rejection of the Birchers by majority sentiment. But the figures also indicate that at the moment when the Society was receiving its most damaging publicity —when the mass media were featuring the charge by Birch founder Robert Welch that President Eisenhower was "a dedicated, conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy"—three million persons still concluded that the Society was a commendable, patriotic, anti-Communist organization. If the undecided 45 per cent were to be divided in the same proportion as those who had reached a judgment (and this would probably underweight pro-Birch sentiment), another two and a half million persons would be added to the ranks of the approving. By this estimate it can be argued, then, that at least five and a half million Americans from among the most public-affairs conscious forty million of our adult population were favorably impressed with the John Birch Society.

One reason for this extraordinarily high degree of support is that the Birch Society has become the most appealing, activist, and efficient movement to appear on the extreme right since the fertile decade of the 1930's. Birch membership at present is probably close to sixty thousand and is distributed widely throughout the nation, with particular strength in traditional centers of fundamentalism like Houston, Los Angeles, Nashville, Wichita, and Boston. This membership provides an annual dues income of $1,300,000. Life memberships at $1,000, special donations by wealthy supporters, and sales of Society literature add perhaps $300,000 more, giving the group a present working fund of $1,600,000 a year. By its own count, the Society has twenty-eight staff workers in its home office in Belmont, Massachusetts, thirty fully salaried and expense-paid traveling coordinators, and one hundred partially paid or volunteer coordinators. Its jabbing forefinger has already been felt in the mid-section of dozens of communities, and some commentators not prone to overestimating fringe movements warn that the Society may become an effective united front for the hundreds of right-wing groups currently operating on the American scene.

All this being the case, it is worth asking

ALAN F. WESTIN, who has been contributing articles to COMMENTARY on questions of civil liberties for almost a decade, is associate professor of Public Law and Government at Columbia University. The present article is based in part on a paper Mr. Westin read last June before the plenary session of the National Community Relations Advisory Council in Washington, D.C.

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what kind of group the John Birch Society is and how it compares with traditional right-wing organizations. Why has it suddenly come into prominence at this particular moment, and what are its prospects in the decade ahead?

I

HOWEVER MUCH factors like urbanization, the cold war, and status insecurities may have provided a new setting for native fundamentalists, a large and irreducible corps of such people has always existed in the United States. Unlike American liberals and conservatives—who accept the political system, acknowledge the loyalty of their opponents, and employ the ordinary political techniques—the fundamentalists can be distinguished by five identifying characteristics:

(1) They assume that there are always solutions capable of producing international victories and of resolving our social problems; when such solutions are not found, they attribute the failure to conspiracies led by evil men and their dupes.

(2) They refuse to believe in the integrity and patriotism of those who lead the dominant social groups—the churches, the unions, the business community, etc. —and declare that the American "Establishment" has become part of the conspiracy.

(3) They reject the political system; they lash out at "politicians," the major parties, and the give-and-take of political compromise as a betrayal of the fundamental Truth and as a circus to divert the people.

(4) They reject those programs for dealing with social, economic, and international problems which liberals and conservatives agree upon as minimal foundations. In their place, the fundamentalists propose drastic panaceas requiring major social change.

(5) To break the net of conspiracy they advocate "direct action," sometimes in the form of a new political party, but more often through secret organization, push-button pressure campaigns, and front groups. Occasionally "direct action" will develop into hate-propaganda and calculated violence.

At various periods, the United States has experienced both left-fundamentalism (the Knights of Labor, the Wobblies, the Populists, the Communists, the Trotskyites, and the Wallace Progressives) and right-fundamentalism (the Know-Nothings, the Coughlinites, the Silver-Shirts, and America First). Today, right-fundamentalism spans a broad spectrum. At one pole, with its passionate thousands, is the "hate" right, led by the Conde McGinleys, Gerald L. K. Smiths, Admiral Crommelins, Father Terminellos, John Kaspers, and George Rockwells, who offer various combinations of anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic, and anti-Negro sentiment. These groups are thoroughly discredited in contemporary America, and the major problem they present is a matter of defining the line which our law should draw between deviant expression and hate-mongering or advocacy of violence. At the opposite pole is the semi-respectable right. Here we encounter a variety of different political and educational organizations including the Foundation for Economic Education, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Committee for Constitutional Government, and the White Citizens' Councils of the South. Socially prominent figures belong to such groups, which are well-financed, often have connections with local and national major party factions, and exercise substantial lobbying influence. Their supporters and leaders may long to break with the two-party system and start a rightist party, but they are restrained by the knowledge that this would isolate them and thus diminish their present effectiveness.

The John Birch Society stands between these two poles. In the words of one of its chapter leaders in Louisville, Kentucky, it is a "middle-of-the-road

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right-wing organization." In order to get a precise picture of its ideology and tactics, I have examined every published word issued by the Society since its formation in 1958: the 1961 annotated edition of the *Blue Book of the John Birch Society,* its operating manual and theological fount; the monthly *Bulletins* which are sent to members and contain the agenda of activities (the 1960 issues of the *Bulletin* are available in a bound edition titled *The White Book of the John Birch Society*); those writings of Robert Welch which have been officially incorporated and reprinted by the Society (e.g., *The Life of John Birch, May God Forgive Us, A Letter to the South on Segregation*); and every issue of *American Opinion,* the monthly publication edited by Robert Welch for the Society.*

MEASURED BY its official materials, the authenticated accounts of Welch's speeches, and public comments by members of the Society's Council, the Society emerges as a pure-bred specimen of American right-fundamentalism.

(1) *Its image of world events and American politics is wholly conspiratorial.* In the July 1960 *Bulletin,* Welch explains that the "key" to the advance of world Communism "is treason right within our government and the place to find it is right in Washington." The danger, Welch says in the *Blue Book,* "is almost entirely internal." And it is "a certainty," he writes in *May God Forgive Us,* that there are "more Communists and Communist sympathizers in our government today than ever before." As recently as January 1961, Welch was informing his supporters that "Communist influences are now in almost complete control of our Federal Government."

Each year since 1958, Welch and his "board of experts" have published a "scoreboard" rating all the nations of the world according to the "present degree of Communist influence and control over the economic and political affairs" of the country. In 1958, the United States was rated as 20–40 per cent under Communist control; in 1959, the United States went up to 30–50 per cent; and in 1960, the figure climbed to 40–60 per cent. (At that pace, we will reach the 80–100 per cent mark in 1964.) England's rating went from 20–40 per cent in 1958 to 50–70 per cent in 1960. Israel is presently rated as 40–60 per cent controlled; Egypt 80–100 per cent.

Everywhere, the Birchers advise, Communists are at the heart of events, even some events that might seem to less skilled observers remote from Kremlin direction. In an open letter to Khrushchev in 1958, Welch said "your hands played the decisive unseen part" in the run on American banks and their closing in 1933. It was the Communist-contrived recognition of the Soviets in 1933 that "saved them from financial collapse." The "very idea of American foreign aid was dreamed up by Stalin, or by his agents for him." The "trouble in the South over integration is Communist-contrived"; the Communists have invented a "phony 'civil rights' slogan to stir up bitterness and civil disorder, leading gradually to police-state rule by federal troops and armed resistance to that rule." The United States Supreme Court "is one of the most important agencies of Communism." The Federal Reserve system is a "realization" of "point 5" of the *Communist Manifesto,* calling for centralization of credit in the hands of the state. The purpose of proposed legislation requiring registration of privately-owned firearms is to aid the Communists in making "ultimate seizure of such by the government easier and more complete." Everywhere, Welch concludes, the Communists are winning: in "the press, the pulpit, the radio and television media, the labor unions, the schools, the courts, and the legislative halls of America."

* This was published by Welch before February 1958 under the slightly more modest title of *One Man's Opinion.*

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ALL THE ABOVE descriptions of conspiratorial trends have been cited from official Birch Society literature, what Welch calls the Society's "steps to the Truth." But the picture grows darker when one turns to the *Black Book,* or, as it is more commonly known, *The Politician*—the book-length "letter" which Welch circulated "privately" to hundreds of persons but which the Society has carefully rejected as an official document. *The Politician* is to the Society what Leninist dogma is to the Communist front groups in Western or neutralist nations—it is the ultimate truth held by the founder and his hard-core, but it is too advanced and too powerful to present, as yet, to the "masses" being led. In *The Politician,* Welch names names. Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, and Eisenhower; Secretary of State John Foster Dulles; CIA Director Allen Dulles; Chief Justice Warren—all of these men are called knowing instruments of the Communist conspiracy.

It is worth noting that Eisenhower and his administration draw the strongest venom in *The Politician,* just as Social Democracts do in full-dose Communist literature. For Welch (a Taft supporter and McCarthy stalwart), the Eisenhower administration was a betrayal which could only have had Communists at its source. "For many reasons and after a lot of study," Welch writes, "I personally believe [John Foster] Dulles to be a Communist agent." "Allen Dulles is the most protected and untouchable supporter of Communism, next to Eisenhower himself, in Washington." Arthur H. Burns's job as head of the Council of Economic Advisers "has been merely a cover-up for Burns's liaison work between Eisenhower and some of his Communist bosses." "The chances are very strong that Milton Eisenhower is actually Dwight Eisenhower's superior and boss within the Communist Party." As for Dwight Eisenhower himself, Welch states unequivocally: "There is only one possible word to describe [Eisenhower's] purpose and actions. That word is treason." "My firm belief that Dwight Eisenhower is a dedicated, conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy," he continues, "is based on an accumulation of detailed evidence so extensive and so palpable that it seems to put this conviction beyond any reasonable doubt." Discussing what he terms Eisenhower's "mentality of fanaticism," Welch refuses to accept the idea that Ike may just be an "opportunistic politician" aiding the Communists. "I personally think he has been sympathetic to ultimate Communist aims, realistically willing to use Communist means to help them achieve their goals, knowingly accepting and abiding by Communist orders, and consciously serving the Communist conspiracy for all of his adult life."

(2) *The Birchers impugn the integrity and patriotism of those at the head of the major social and economic groups of the nation.* In a supplement to the February 1961 *Bulletin,* Welch announced that "Communist influences" are "very powerful in the top echelons of our educational system, our labor-union organizations, many of our religious organizations, and of almost every important segment of our national life. Insidiously but rapidly the Communists are now reaching the tentacles of their conspiracy downward throughout the whole social, economic, and political pyramid." Thus, the National Council of Churches of Christ is Communist-minded, and from 3 to 5 per cent of the Protestant clergy have been called actual Communists. "Treason," Welch further declares, "is widespread and rampant in our high army circles." The American Medical Association has been "took" and can no longer be depended upon for support in the fight against socialism. So too with the United States Chamber of Commerce, which has been preaching dangerously liberal and internationalist doctrines in its courses on practical politics. (When Chamber leaders protested this slur, Welch replied

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that their outraged reaction was exactly like that of the State Department in the 1940's when charges of Communist infiltration were first raised.) The leadership of our universities, corporations, foundations, communications media—all are riddled with Communists, or "Comsymps" (a word Welch coined to avoid having to say whether a given person was a real party member or only a sympathizer).

Naturally, Welch and his colleagues are certain that these "Comsymp" elites are out to destroy him and his movement. References to persecution and images of martyrdom abound in Birch literature, ranging from incessant mention of how the patron saint (Senator McCarthy) was driven to his death, to suggestions that Welch may be murdered one day by the Communists.

(3) *The Birchers are convinced that the Communists have gone so far in penetrating American politics that there is little hope in the existing political system.* In his letter to Khrushchev, Welch wrote that the Communists obviously intended to "maintain and increase [their] working control over both our major political parties." We cannot count on "politicians, political leadership or even political action." Though he advocates the nomination, on an American Party ticket, of Senator Barry Goldwater for President and J. Strom Thurmond for Vice President in 1964, Welch has warned his followers that even Goldwater—the most "Americanist" figure around in politics at the moment—is "still a politician" and therefore not to be relied upon. Welch has also had some things to say about "Jumping Jack" Kennedy. According to Welch, the nation received "the exact Communist line . . . from Jack Kennedy's speeches, as quickly and faithfully as from the *Worker* or the *National Guardian*. . . . " And in 1959, Welch denounced the "Kennedy brat" for "finding the courage to join the jackals picking at the corpse of McCarthy."

A particularly revealing sample of Welch's sense of American political realities is found in his description of the Eisenhower "steal" of the Republican nomination in 1952, one of the "dirtiest deals in American political history, participated in if not actually engineered by Richard Nixon." If Taft had not been cheated of the nomination, Welch predicted:

> It is almost certain that Taft would then have been elected President by a far greater plurality than was Eisenhower, that a grand rout of the Communists in our government and in our midst would have been started, that McCarthy would be alive today, and that we wouldn't even be in this mess. . . .

(4) *Most of the Birch Society's positive program consists of advocating the repeal of things or the removal of the nation from something or somewhere.* A partial list of the things that the Society describes as wicked, Communist, and dangerous includes: U.S. membership in the United Nations, the International Labor Organization, the World Health Organization, the International Trade Organization, and UNICEF; membership in GATT (the General Agreement on Trades and Tariffs); reciprocal trade agreements; the "useless and costly" NATO; "so-called defense spending"; all foreign aid; diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and all other Communist nations; the National Labor Relations Act; social security; the graduated income tax; the Rural Electrification Administration, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, and TVA; government wage and price controls; "forced integration"; "deliberately fraudulent" U.S. government bonds; the Federal Reserve system; urban renewal; fluoridation; metro government; the corporate dividend tax; the "mental health racket"; federal aid to housing; and all programs "regimenting" farmers.

Some items on this list may be opposed by conservatives or by liberals. But taken together, it adds up to a nihilist's plea for

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the repeal of industrialism and the abolition of international politics. Such a program can be called rational or even political only by people who do not know what those words mean.

(5) *Finally, the Birch Society advocates both "direct action" and "dirty tactics" to "break the grip of the Communist conspiracy."* Unlike those right-fundamentalist groups which have energetic leaders but passive memberships, the Birchers are decidedly activist. "Get to work or learn to talk Russian," is a slogan Welch recommends to his followers, and they are certainly hard at work. From national headquarters in Belmont, Massachusetts, Welch formulates a set of complementary national and local action programs, then issues them to members through directives in the *Bulletin* and contacts with chapter leaders. A mixture of traditional and fundamentalist techniques is prescribed. The local programs include infiltration of community organizations such as PTA ("to take them away from the Communists"); harassment of "pro-Communist" speakers at church meetings, political gatherings, and public forums; creation of local front groups (e.g., the Committee Against Summit Entanglements, College Graduates Against Educating Traitors at Government Expense, the Committee to Impeach Earl Warren, and the Committee to Investigate Communist Influences at Vassar College); campaigns to secure endorsement of Birch positions and signatures for Birch petitions in all groups that Birch members belong to (e.g., veterans and business organizations); letters and telephone calls to local public officials, leading citizens, and newspapers who support what the Society opposes or oppose the Society directly; monthly telephone calls to the local public library to make sure it has copies of the five right-wing books recommended by Welch every month.

The national campaigns are carefully pinpointed efforts. They range from letter- and postcard-writing to national advertising campaigns. In the past two years, Birchers have been told to: write the National Boy Scouts director and demand to know why the president of the National Council of Churches addressed their National Jamboree; insist personally and in writing each time a member flies American, United, or Eastern Airlines that they stock *Human Events* and *National Review* on their planes; write to *Newsweek* to protest a "pro-FLN Communist" story (the Society has a crush on Jacques Soustelle), to *Life* protesting the "glorification" of Charles Van Doren, and to the NBC network and the Purex Corporation for sponsoring a TV drama favorable to Sacco and Vanzetti; circulate petitions and write letters on the number one project of the moment, to impeach Chief Justice Warren and thereby "give the Communists a setback." Welch also sends out the copy for punchy postcards to be addressed to national political leaders. To cite instances in 1960 alone: to Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. at the UN, "Two questions, Mr. Lodge—Who Murdered Bang-Jensen? And Which Side are You On?"; to Secretary of State Christian Herter, "Castro is a Communist. Trujillo is an anti-Communist. Whose Side are You On?"; and to President Eisenhower, on the eve of the scheduled summit conference, "Dear President Eisenhower—If you go, don't come back."

The last postcard stirred some protests from Society members, who felt that Welch's savage little message to the President was a bit too strong. Welch set them straight in the *Bulletin*: "It is one of our many sorrows that, in fighting the evil forces which now threaten our civilization, for us to be *too civilized* is unquestionably to be defeated." The Communists, he continued, want us to be "too gentle, too respectable . . . [but] this is not a cream-puff war . . . and we do mean business every step of the way." Welch admitted that the technique of planted and loaded questions and the disruption of meetings was a "dirty trick," but he

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still defended it as another vital tactic.

To stimulate compliance by members with the local and national efforts prescribed each month in the *Bulletin,* Welch has devised the MMM system, or "Member's Monthly Memos." These forms are filled out by the member detailing what he or she has done and including sundry observations on the "Americanist fight." They are then collected by the chapter leader and transmitted to Belmont. Welch and his staff, according to the *Bulletin,* spend much time going over the MMM's.

SO FAR, the Birch Society has been successful in attracting to it some highly substantial figures in local communities—physicians, stockbrokers, retired military officers, lawyers, businessmen (particularly small and middle-sized manufacturers in the Midwest and South), and professionals, many of whom have become local chapter leaders and state coordinators. The Council of the Society is a veritable board of directors of right-fundamentalism: men like Colonel Lawrence Bunker, Cola G. Parker, T. Coleman Andrews, Clarence Manion, and Spruille Braden. Among the contributing editors and editorial advisory committee for *American Opinion* are J. B. Matthews, William S. Schlamm, Kenneth Colegrove, J. Bracken Lee, Ludwig von Mises, Adolph Menjou, J. Howard Pew, and Albert C. Wedemeyer. In several communities, observers of the Society have noted a significant number of thirty-to-forty-year-olds joining the organization. Welch has stated that half of the Society's membership is Catholic, that there are some Jewish members, and that there are Negroes also—two segregated locals in the South and integrated chapters in the North.

Press reports suggest that most of the Society's members already had strong affiliations with other right-wing groups before the Birch Society was formed. What Welch hopes to do is build a one-million member organization by welding together the masses of right-fundamentalist joiners into the fighting educational and pressure arm of the John Birch Society. In the *Bulletin* and *American Opinion,* Welch continually offers flattering salutes to various right-wing groups, publications, and personalities, stressing that "Americanists" can work in several forums at once for the cause. In May 1961, for example, Welch listed two pages of "other anti-Communist groups" which he endorsed and urged Birchers to support. These included the American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, the American Council of Christian Laymen, the Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation, the Catholic Freedom Foundation, the Christian Crusade, the Freedom Club (of Los Angeles), Freedom in Action (Houston), the Intercollegiate Society of Individualists, the Network of Patriotic Letter Writers (Pasadena), and We, The People! (Chicago). In turn, Welch's appearances are often sponsored by such groups: the Freedom Club of Reverend James Fifield arranged his Los Angeles rally, and the Sons of the American Revolution sponsored his Houston appearance.

To a large extent, Welch's personal selflessness and his salesmanship have already made him a rallying point for the fundamentalist right, and no recent right-wing group comes to mind which has achieved so large and solid a dues-paying and working membership. In a world of Communist advances in Asia and Africa, pressures on Berlin, vast changes in the relation of white to colored populations throughout the world, the Birch Society has developed a thoroughly satisfying way for the thin-lipped little lady from Wichita or the self-made manufacturer of plumbing fixtures in North Carolina to work in manageable little daily doses against "the Communists." The cancer of the unquestioned international Communist menace and the surgery of local pressure on the PTA and public library—here is a perfect appeal for right funda-

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mentalism. This highlights the fact that the Society's most successful efforts to date have not been on the national scene but on the "soft underbelly" of American democracy—those places where a minimum of pressure can often produce maximum terror and restrictive responses. Welch has stressed that school boards, city colleges, local businesses, local clergy, and similar targets are the ones to concentrate on. Above all, Welch has brought *coordination* to the fundamentalist right—coordinated targets, coordinated meetings and rallies, and coordinated pressure tactics. "All of a sudden," the director of a Jewish Community Council in one city reflected, "the right wingers began to function like a disciplined platoon. We have had to contend with precision and saturation ever since."

II

IF THIS IS WHAT the Society advocates and how it functions, what are its immediate and long-range prospects? In the short run, the Society has lost one of its most potent weapons—the element of secrecy. Those in local communities who felt the sting of Birch campaigns during 1959–61 report that it was the factor of surprise at these sudden fundamentalist pressures and the unawareness of their organizational source which threw them off balance. Now, however, the Society has been brought into public view. Its authoritarian character and extremist statements have been attacked in both liberal and conservative newspapers; by important Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish leaders; and by political figures as diverse as Richard Nixon, President John Kennedy, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, Representative Sam Rayburn, Senator Thomas E. Dodd, and even Senator Barry Goldwater himself. The fact that a prominent leader of the Society who had been chosen as Washington lobbyist for the American Retail Federation was hastily discarded in June by the Federation because of his Birch affiliation indicates that recent publicity has damaged the Society's claim to respectability. One Midwestern Congressman known for his open advocacy of right-wing movements felt it wise recently to seek out liberal leaders from his community and explain privately that he did *not* support the Birch movement. Increasingly, those "solid" figures who joined the group when it was operating privately will have to face public disapproval of the Society, and this will probably cause some falling away among border-line conservatives.

In the longer perspective, however, there are three specific factors which deserve mention in assessing the Society's potential growth. The first is the authoritarian character of the group and the centralized control exercised by Robert Welch (a situation which has led Senator Goldwater to criticize Welch directly). According to the charter of the Society, Welch is the absolute leader; there is no accounting of dues or contributions; there is no representative process or democratic system for selecting programs or defining positions; and Welch has the power (which he has used) to expel any member or chapter for reasons sufficient to him, without right of hearing or appeal on the expulsion. This has produced widespread criticism of Welch as a "little Hitler" and the Society as a group run on fascist lines. However, Welch has stressed again and again that members can disagree with him; that he doesn't expect any member to carry out a project which violates his conscience; and that the Society definitely opposes an "enforced conformity" within its ranks. The controls, Welch explains, are needed to prevent Communist infiltration of the Society (which he believes has already begun or will certainly begin as the Society becomes more effective) and infiltration by hate-mongers. This blend of leader-principle and group self-protection has great appeal to right-fundamentalists and even to some right-wing conservatives. The authoritarian set-up makes fine ammunition for liberal and main-

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stream-conservative fire, but this is not likely to harm Welch a bit in his recruiting among fundamentalists.

A second factor is Welch himself. The fantastic allegations he has made in *The Politician*—even though the book has not been endorsed by the Council and is, indeed, repudiated by some members—have branded him as an unbalanced figure and convinced many staunch conservatives that Welch is a truly dangerous leader. The conservative Los Angeles *Times* recently did a thorough exposé of the Society and wrote a stinging editorial which read Welch out of the conservative camp. Out of self-defense, Republicans in California joined in with the *Times* (especially in condemning Welch's attacks on Eisenhower), for the Birchers were proving so effective in pulling the Republican party to the far right that some counterattack was felt to be essential. Welch himself has been highly equivocal about *The Politician*. He insists that it was a "private" letter and never published, though he does not deny its authenticity. In the May 1961 issue of the *Bulletin,* he alludes to "questions or criticism from some of our most loyal members" relating to *The Politician*. To these, he replies that "the considerations involved in connection with many such matters are varied, overlapping, involved, and with too many ramifications to be explained in short compass. There are even times when, for reasons of strategy, we take an oblique approach to a specific objective, and fully to explain every step of our course would seriously handicap our effectiveness." Having decided not to say anything at all, Welch assured members that if he "could give . . . the whole background of events" then objections might turn into approval, and with this, he dropped the subject of his *magnum opus*.

Those members and leaders of the Society who find anything to criticize in *The Politician* (and many have fully endorsed the charges it featured) have stressed that Welch is entitled to his personal views and that their disagreement with him on Ike or the two Dulles brothers indicates how free and diverse the Society is.

In all probability Welch's talents as an organizer, salesman, proselytizer, and unifier of right-wing ranks overweigh (for the right-wing aristocracy) his tactical blunder in *The Politician*. Since he controls the Society fully, he is not likely to be replaced, and, indeed, there is no indication that an acceptable replacement is available either in the Society or outside it. As long as he heads the Society, however, *The Politician* will severely limit his credibility outside fundamentalist strongholds.

A THIRD FACTOR relating to the Birch Society's immediate prospects is the question of anti-Semitism. Repeated charges have been made that the Society is a genteel endorser of anti-Semitic persons and literature. Welch has recommended to his members such anti-Semitic publications as Russell Maguire's *American Mercury* and Merwin K. Hart's *Economic Council Newsletter*. Hart—who often talks about a conspiracy of "Zionists and their confederates" controlling America and whose organization was described by a Congressional committee investigating lobbying as one which relies on "an ill-concealed anti-Semitism"—is presently leader of the Birch Society's Manhattan Chapter No. 26. In addition, such openly anti-Semitic spokesmen as Conde McGinley have rushed to endorse the Birch Society. In the March 15, 1961 issue of *Common Sense,* McGinley wrote: "Inasmuch as we have received many inquiries from all over the United States regarding the John Birch Society, we want to go on record. We believe this to be an effective, patriotic group, in good hands."

On the other hand, Welch has always appealed to all religions, has urged Jews to join the Society, and has warned that it is a "Communist tactic to stir up distrust and hatred between Jews and Gentiles, Catholics and Protestants, Negroes

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and Whites." Much of the April 1961 issue of his *Bulletin* is devoted to a discussion of the allegation that the Society is anti-Semitic, and what Welch has to say there is well worth close examination.

He opens by noting that "the most vicious" charges leveled against him have come from "such notorious anti-Semites as Lyrl Clark Van Hyning (*Women's Voice*) and Elizabeth Dilling (the *Dilling Bulletin*) on the grounds that my various committees and supporters are nothing but a 'bunch of Jews and Jew-kissers.'..." He then cites the names of Jewish members of the Society such as Willi Schlamm, Julius Epstein, Morrie Ryskind, the late Alfred Kohlberg, and Rabbi Max Merritt, and indicates that it has been endorsed by the American Jewish League Against Communism (a Jewish right-fundamentalist group). Next, Welch explains that he probably has "more good friends of the Jewish faith than any other Gentile in America." When he was in the candy manufacturing business in Massachusetts, he recalls, he had many Jewish customers; he drank coffee in their kitchens at midnight, borrowed money from them and lent them money in return, and engaged in every kind of business and social activity with Jews.

Turning to some specific accusations, Welch admits that he used a pamphlet by Joseph Kamp as a source for his book, *May God Forgive Us*, and also paid Kamp a hundred dollars to go through *The Life of John Birch* to find errors. This was in 1954. But later, he says, he became "aware of both the fact and the weapon of anti-Semitism in America, and I wanted no part of the whole argument." He had nothing further to do with Kamp after the 1954 contact, but he adds that he still simply doesn't know enough to say whether Kamp is really anti-Semitic.

Welch goes on to relate that a person who had been trying to convert one local chapter into "a hotbed of anti-Semitism" was dropped from the Society, and he pledges that the Society will never become a haven for anti-Semitic feeling "so long as I am directing its policies." After several additional paragraphs explaining why no member of the Jewish faith can also be a Communist (and pointing out that Karl Marx was "probably the most vicious anti-Semite of all times"), Welch concludes with the following warning:

> There is only one real danger in the charge of anti-Semitism today, to the man who actually is not anti-Semitic. It is that the utter (and in some cases malicious) unfairness of the charge may cause him to react with anger against Jews in general, and then begin to let some of his feeling creep into his writings or his speeches. That brings on even more vitriolic attacks, with a few more straws to support them. And so the development continues until the man in question winds up actually becoming violently anti-Semitic. And he seldom realizes that this was the Communist game and purpose all along, of which the majority of Jews who innocently helped the Reds to implement it were as unaware and innocent as the ordinary Methodist who supports the National Council of Churches. And many an anti-Communist fighter of great promise in America has had his career ruined and his effectiveness destroyed by letting himself fall into that carefully prepared trap.

This will never happen to him, Welch declares; to his "thousands of Jewish friends" he pledges, "I shall remain your friend, no matter what happens. . . ."*

All the evidence available at the moment suggests the presence of a certain ambivalence in the Birch Society on the matter of anti-Semitism. Welch himself seems to be personally without bias toward Jews, and he wants the Society to reflect this position. Yet there is no doubt that some local leaders and members are well-known anti-Semites. With one after another of the rabbinical associations and

* One other bit of information bearing on Welch's attitude is that he has been consistently anti-Nasser, viewing the Arab nationalists as aiding the Communists in gaining control of the Middle East.

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major Jewish civic groups speaking out in complete condemnation of Welch and his movement, there will be rising pressures to respond to the "Jewish attacks." Probably, Welch will continue to allow some light flirtation with the more sophisticated anti-Semitic spokesmen. But it is a testimony to American maturity and the activities of Jewish defense agencies that open anti-Semitism is seen as a dead end today for any "middle-of-the-road right-wing organization."

One final aspect of the Society should be noted. Welch's writings have a remarkable combination of fantastic allegation and sweet reasonableness. Along with his proposals advocating drastic action against the Communist agents all over America will go reminders to be polite while making menacing telephone calls to local officials, to exercise self-restraint when attacked unfairly, and to take no action which violates "moral principles." "It is a major purpose of the John Birch Society," he often explains, one "never to be overlooked by its members, to help in every way we can—by example as well as precept—to restore an abiding sense of moral values to greater use as a guide of conduct for individuals, for groups, and ultimately for nations." If there are some right-fundamentalists to whom this sort of passage sounds a bit like the National Council of Churches, the total blend of warm-hearted, main-street vigilantism is still appealing to the majority of Welch's followers.

III

WHATEVER THE specific prospects for the Birch Society —and I consider them unhappily bright —the 1960's will surely be years of expansion for the fundamentalist right in this country. Several things point toward that conclusion.

First, this will be a decade of immense frustration for American foreign policy. We will witness increased neutralism among the new nations; increased militancy among the non-white peoples over questions of color; constant military and scientific pressures from the Russians and, soon, the Chinese Communists; diminished American influence in the United Nations; greater conflict in Latin America; and continued outlays of foreign assistance which do not "buy loyalties" or "deliver votes" on critical issues. If the United States can simply prevent these situations from exploding, most informed students of diplomacy would think we had done well. But cutting losses inflicted by the stagnant 1950's and preparing hopeful future positions is not going to appeal to the right-fundamentalist masses (or the frantic pacifist variety on the left either). The right is unshakable in its faith in unilateral solutions and its belief that each loss for America can be traced to a Communist agent or "Comsymp" in the CIA, at the New York *Times,* in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, or at the Yale Law School. And the inescapable strategic retreats of the early 1960's (Laos is a good example) will lend fuel to the fires on the right.

Second, the domestic racial issue also poses a serious threat of a rise in right-fundamentalism. In the 1960's, the struggle for Negro equality will move increasingly into areas outside the South. Lower-middle-class and middle-class resentments against Negro neighbors and Negro competitors are bound to increase. The crescendo of Negro militancy and the spreading use of government power to enforce civil rights will peel away the already thinned layers of toleration in many sectors of the Northern and Western population. In this area of public policy, groups like the Birch Society—which are not explicitly anti-Negro but oppose compulsory integration—have a promising position, and the reservoirs of white hostility, unless carefully and wisely channeled by both white and Negro liberal leaders, could fill the well of the fundamentalist right to overflowing.

Third, there exists the distinct possibility

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of an unprecedented coalition of Catholic and Protestant right-fundamentalists in the 1960's. Only those who know little about the history of American Catholicism would assume that this is a monolithic community. Yet many factors suggest that the 1960's may see an even deeper division of American Catholics into warring ideological factions than has obtained at any time in the past. Already some influential Catholics are complaining bitterly that President Kennedy has joined the "Liberalist Establishment," that he has been "selling out" Catholic Church interests, and that the administration of the first Catholic President may go down in history as the "softest on Communism." This is far from the dominant view among American Catholics. Indeed, it may represent the last thrashing of the old, super-loyalist element in the American Catholic community—a group which will be goaded to extremism by the sight of an a-clerical, literate, sophisticated Catholic liberal in the White House. Under these conditions, and with the magic memory of Joseph McCarthy to help bridge the chasm of the Reformation, the fundamentalist Protestants and the fundamentalist Catholics may enter into an alliance (possibly inside the Birch Society).

BUT PERHAPS the central question mark for right-fundamentalism in the 1960's is not issues or groups but a man—Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona. At the moment, he is the beloved crusader of the right and he has given his fundamentalist supporters every possible encouragement. Before very much longer, however, as the jockeying for position in 1964 begins, Goldwater will have to decide whether he wants to be a Republican presidential hopeful and Senate leader or the head of an ideological crusade. If he chooses two-party politics, Goldwater will have to undercut the Birch Society, for it could embarrass him by its extremism, and it is not under his control. (Already, Goldwater has called on Welch to resign because of his authoritarian controls and his charges against Eisenhower.) Many experienced observers of Washington politics doubt whether Goldwater has the personality and the paranoia to become a fundamentalist ideologue and wander in a political wilderness. However, if Goldwater should lose the Republican nomination to someone like Nelson Rockefeller and if he were to decide that there was no hope for his ambitions within the GOP, he could mold the fundamentalist right into a cohesive movement which would assume immediate political influence.

These, then, are the factors which point to a resurgence of the far right wing in the 1960's. But, it should be said on the other side, a rejuvenated and expanded liberal movement is also likely to develop in the United States during the next few years. The signs are already present on American college campuses, where a decade of student apathy and fatalism is giving way to a revival of both liberal and (respectable) conservative political commitment. Whether the Kennedy administration will move from its first year of dreary if realistic compromise to give direction and enthusiasm to the liberal cause remains to be seen. At any rate, the resources are there to be marshaled, and they are potentially our greatest protection against the mounting right-fundamentalist threat.

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ROBERT ALTER

THE GENIUS OF S. Y. AGNON

THE FLOURISHING OF a diversified secular literature in Hebrew during the last two hundred years is in its way as remarkable as any blossoming of garden spots on neglected desert soil in Israel. The pioneer farmers had at least the sand to start with, while the new Hebrew literature, from its inception during the Enlightenment until after the First World War, had no land, no secular literary tradition, not even a body of Hebrew-speaking readers, in which it could take root. And the society of Palestine and Israel, in constant transition during the last four decades, has scarcely given the Hebrew writer more solid ground on which to stand.

Quite understandably, readers of modern Hebrew literature are inclined to be defensive about it. In the rare cases when someone of real interest has appeared on the Hebrew literary scene, critics have pounced on any connections they could make with major European writers: comparison was a way of saying that one of the local products had arrived. Thus Mendele Mocher Seforim, whose vivid satirical portrayal of East European Jewry made him, toward the end of the last century, the first important Hebrew novelist, was tagged the Hebrew Cervantes —simply because he had committed the indiscretion of modeling one minor novel after *Don Quixote*. Y. H. Brenner, an intent, introspective writer (and translator of *Crime and Punishment*) whose stories during the early years of this century repeatedly contemplated the alternatives of madness and suicide, was inevitably labeled the Hebrew Dostoevsky. (At about the same time in Yiddish literature, Sholom Aleichem was having his place fixed as the Jewish Mark Twain.) Shmuel Yosef Agnon has dominated Hebrew fiction now for more than half a century, and consequently he has been a favorite subject for these international comparisons. The diversity and complexity of his work has caused his name to be linked with more than one European writer.

Back before the outbreak of World War I, Martin Buber—who was to become Agnon's friend and his collaborator in research on Hasidic tales—described the young writer as "the Hebrew Homer of modern literature" after the appearance of Agnon's artistic folktale, "And the Crooked Will Be Straight." In the 30's, with the publication of *The Bridal Canopy*—a patchwork of stories with the travels of a Quixote-Sancho pair forming the cadre—Agnon inherited Mendele's place as the Hebrew Cervantes. It was clear that all this would not do. The Hebrew novelist might be certified with the stamp of ancient Greek and Renaissance Spanish art, but in order for him to have contemporary stature, some distinctively modern analogue had to be found, and the nightmarish expressionist stories that he began publishing in the 30's and continues to write today have invited the description of Agnon as the Hebrew Kafka. However commendable the enthusiasm behind these comparisons to great names in Western literature, the truth is that the qualities which

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raise any Hebrew writer above the usual second rank of his colleagues are not likely to be found in any such resemblances, but, on the contrary, in the characteristics unique to him as an individual artist, as a user of the Hebrew language, and as a Jew.

INFLUENCES FROM the outside, of course, or even coincidental similarities with the outside, are not irrelevant to criticism. In Agnon's case, a collection of stories like his later *Book of Deeds** (from which two short pieces were translated for the October 1960 COMMENTARY) reflects certain affinities with Kafka so pronounced that they can hardly be overlooked. Agnon is generally very coy about the sources and intentions of his writings and is said to have denied having any knowledge of Kafka, though this seems highly improbable in a man who has been an avid lifelong reader of German literature. (There is even a personal link between Agnon and Kafka in Max Brod, Kafka's friend and biographer, who has been an acquaintance and admirer of the Hebrew author since the 20's.)

The Book of Deeds, in the manner of Kafka, introduces its readers to a dreamlike world where the ordinary laws of time and place, of logical sequence and causality, seem to be suspended. Although Agnon has little of the neurotic intensity that distinguishes Kafka's writing, he possesses something of the same sense of a world where terrible things are waiting to spring out from the shadows of experience. Also while Agnon rarely seeks the shocking visual effects one occasionally finds in Kafka, his Hebrew has much the same unexcited, deliberately restrained tone of narration as Kafka's German, and achieves a very convincing Kafkaesque *frisson,* often through the imagery of sounds. A good example is afforded in the story "A Whole Loaf"†:

> Again the clock rang out. My ears ached with tiredness and the lamp smoked and a black stillness filled the room. In the midst of the silence, I heard the scraping of a key in the lock, like the sound of a nail being driven into flesh, and I realized that they had locked me in and forgotten me.

Agnon seldom elaborates a detailed image of the action he describes, but his quiet, orderly, almost detached contemplation of horror creates a strange and disturbing effect by the very contrast between the manner and matter of narration. The same character who finds himself shut up for the night in an empty restaurant goes on to tell what happens after the final turn of the key in the lock.

> I heard a kind of rustling and saw a rat that had jumped up on the table and was nibbling at the left-over bones. Now he's feeding on the bones, I told myself. Afterwards he'll chew up the tablecloth, then the chair I'm sitting on. Afterwards he'll start on me. First he'll chew up my shoes, then my socks, then my feet, then my calves, and finally the whole body. I fixed my eyes on the wall and saw the clock. I waited for it to ring again, hoping it would frighten away the rat before he got me. A cat appeared and I thought I was saved. But the rat ignored the cat and the cat ignored the rat. The two of them crouched there and gnawed away.

The narrator of this story, like most of the protagonists in both Agnon and Kafka, is a wholly passive figure, at the mercy of demonic forces that mock him or threaten to destroy him. And the Hebrew writer, like the German, is constantly concerned with the theme of judgment. His characters often find themselves peremptorily summoned before some sort of tribunal; their crucial experiences are set characteristically on the eve of the Jewish New Year or on the Day of Atonement, when Jews place themselves under the scrutiny of divine judgment. In all this nightmare world, moreover, Agnon's surrogates, like Kafka's, discover the greatest horror in the reality of their own selves. For example, Agnon's short novel *Till Now* (1953) is set in the Germany of World War I (where the author himself lived during this period), and examines the dislocating and dehumanizing effects of the war; however, the dramatic and moral interest of the book is characteristically built up around the private experience of the self:

> I dreamt that a great war had come upon the world, and they called me up to fight. I swore a solemn vow to God that

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* The Hebrew title has a double meaning, and could also be translated as *The Book of Tales.*

† The translation here from the Hebrew is mine, as in all following passages.

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> if I returned from the war unharmed, whoever came out of my house to greet me when I returned I would offer up as a sacrifice. I returned to my house unharmed, and it was I myself who came out to greet me.

Agnon's earliest stories are largely artistic reworkings of themes drawn from folk tales. But one of the folk-tale themes that attracted him from the start was that of the fatal mistake and its inescapable consequences, one which also preoccupied Kafka. His first published story, "Mateless Souls" (1908), begins, significantly, with an image of disrupted moral order. God is described weaving a beautiful prayer shawl from the threads of loving-kindness in the actions of the people of Israel. But sometimes a mishap occurs: a thread is broken off, the fabric begins to unravel, evil winds pierce it and rip it to pieces. "At once men are seized by a feeling of shame and they know that they are naked"—these last words, of course, echo the description in Genesis of the shame of Adam and Eve. And though some of Agnon's early folk tales present Edens of ideal harmony and piety, his imagination is more usually drawn to situations where the serpent's counsel has been followed, and there is no way of revoking its disruptive and evil consequences. In "Mateless Souls" a father contracts the wrong marriage for his daughter; in the story "And the Crooked Shall Be Straight" a storekeeper squanders his family's savings; in "The Outcast" a proud aristocrat calls down a holy man's curse on his house—and in each case the protagonists are caught up in an irreversible stream of circumstances that carries them to their ruin. In his later work, Agnon no longer presents this situation in the traditional terms of inexorable fate, but he places his characters in the same predicament of being subject to inscrutable forces over which they have no control.

A similar kind of helplessness is discernible in the heroes of those later novels by Agnon which have realistic social backgrounds. Also reminiscent of Kafka is the passivity of his male figures in contrast to the domineering and sometimes demonic females who enter their lives. Herschel Horwitz, the hero of *A Simple Story,* a novel Agnon wrote in the 20's about a Galician town at the turn of the century, is controlled first by his mother and then by the woman to whom he is married against his will. Yitzhak Kummer, the protagonist of *Not Long Ago* (1946), a novel set in Palestine in the years before the outbreak of World War I, is buffeted between two women—the blond Sonya in the new settlement at Jaffa and the dark-haired Rivka in Old Jerusalem. Manfred Herbst, the central figure in the unfinished novel *Shira* (chapters appeared from 1951 to 1954), is a university professor in the Jerusalem of the late 30's, a man habitually passive both in his career and in his private life. He allows himself to be seduced by the hard-mannered, sensual nurse, Shira, at the very moment when his wife is giving birth to their child in the hospital where Shira works.

VALID AS THESE points of comparison with Kafka may be, Agnon, the distinctive artist is, it need hardly be said, much more than a Hebrew Kafka. Even his "Kafkaesque" stories bear the unmistakable marks of Agnon's own special vision; in any case, they comprise only one segment of his varied literary production over the last fifty-three years. But beyond all similarities, while Kafka exemplifies the distress of rootlessness that has characterized so many Jews in modern times, Agnon's uniqueness derives from the fact that he is so deeply rooted in a tradition. Agnon is in many ways the most profoundly Jewish writer to have appeared in modern Hebrew literature, and it is in his role as heir to a Jewish religious and cultural heritage that his artistic distinctiveness is to be sought. During the same period when he was conceiving the first stories of *The Book of Deeds,* Agnon published a charming little anecdotal essay, "The Sense of Smell," which included a short section entitled "The Secret of Writing Stories." Here he discloses the religious impulse of his fiction:

> Out of affection for our language and love of the holy, I burn midnight oil over the teachings of the Torah and deny myself food for the words of our sages that I may store them up within me to be ready upon my lips. If the Temple were standing, I would take my place on the platform with my fellow choristers [Agnon traces his ancestry to the tribe of Levi] and would recite each day the song

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that the Levites used to say in the Holy Temple. But since the Temple is destroyed and we have neither Priests in their service nor Levites in their chorus and song, I devote myself to the Torah, the Prophets, the latter Scriptures, the Mishnah, Halachah and Aggada, the Tosefta, rabbinical commentaries and textual glosses. When I look at their words and see that of all our precious possessions in ancient times only the memory is left us, I am filled with sorrow. And that sorrow makes my heart tremble. And from that trembling I write stories, like a man banished from his father's palace who builds himself a small shelter and sits there telling the glory of his ancestral home.

Another observation about Agnon that the passage suggests is the inborn need of a poet to sing, in one way or another, which has motivated him since boyhood. The years around the turn of the century, when the young Agnon was learning Talmud in the Galician town of Buczacz where he was born, were part of a period when one might occasionally discover a copy of Euclid or Spinoza hidden inside a yeshiva student's bulky Talmud folio. But if anything were found slipped in between the pages of the youthful Agnon's Aramaic text, it would probably have been a sample of his own Hebrew verse. Unlike the surreptitious pamphlets of mathematics and philosophy, his verses were directly and closely related to much of what was printed on the pages of the Talmud, and when Agnon left the *shtetl* to venture out into the world of belles-lettres, he did not leave the Talmud behind, as did his contemporaries from the *yeshivot* when they made their entrance into European culture.

AGNON HAS devoted his life to creative writing—and with a permanent annual stipend from his publishers, the Schocken House, he is probably the only Hebrew writer ever to make a comfortable living from his writing alone. But he has also devoted his life to the study of Torah. On Agnon's desk in his home in Talpiot, the quiet Jerusalem suburb where he has lived for over thirty years, one might conceivably find a copy of James Joyce (in translation) or Rilke, but one is more apt to see some yellowed, flaking volume that proves to be an obscure 8th-century homiletical commentary on the Pentateuch, or a collection of Hasidic parables, or perhaps a late medieval mystical treatise. In this respect, Agnon continues the tradition of the illustrious rabbinic line from which he is descended, and possesses a voluminous knowledge of traditional Hebrew and Aramaic source materials—the Bible, with all its rabbinic commentaries, the Talmud, the Midrash, Maimonides and the medieval Jewish philosophers, the Cabbala, the literature of the *Musar* movement, and, of course, the literature of the Hasidic tradition of more modern times.

While all this Jewish erudition has served as an inexhaustible mine of materials —both verbal and conceptual—from which Agnon has fashioned his creative vision, the relation between Agnon the author and Agnon the learned and pious Jew is to some extent ambivalent. There are times when he looks ironically on his own role as writer (or *sofer,* which in traditional Hebrew meant Torah scribe, and in modern usage generally means author); a Jew, he implies, ought to be an inscriber of holy scrolls, not someone who simply tries to write pretty things. In at least two of his stories he attempts to resolve this conflict by imagining himself as a *sofer* in both senses of the world—a writer whose stories and novels form one long Torah scroll.

The image that Agnon draws of himself as the craftsman of a holy book in which the people will read and God's name will be sanctified, is instructive, but it is not an altogether faithful self-portrait. It is true, on the one hand, that Agnon's work often gives evidence of a writer who has a sense of himself not merely as the artist before his audience, but as the artist-member of a people standing before God. There are stories that he uses from beginning to end as vehicles for "telling the glory of his ancestral home." When he depicts the greatness of a Jewish past—which means for him the traces of God's working, or the lives of godly men, in the ancient or recent past—his role as artist does not differ substantially from that of the creative imaginations in the early Middle Ages that produced the Midrash, or of the half-forgotten medieval poets who produced the ornamental liturgical verse of the *Piyyutim.* But it is also true that a large part of Agnon's work is intensely

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personal, even confessional, in nature. The *sofer* who has mastered the calligraphy of sacred scrolls is no less a modern writer struggling with his own individual problems and with his own needs for expression. The banished son attempting to recall the splendors of his father's house cannot shelter himself from the world around him with its visions of destruction and uprooting, its dream demons and their twisted Jephthah-vows.

Thus at times there is perceptible the tension between the artist and the traditionalist in Agnon; but what is most remarkable about him is the way he has absorbed Jewish tradition, made it part of himself in making himself part of it, so that he has been able to build upon it a distinctive and highly personal artistic vision. Agnon's creative adaptation of traditional materials can best be examined in terms of the language and the motifs and symbols he employs. At the same time, his use of language and symbol discloses the recurrent ideas and concerns of Jewish tradition that appear in his writing.

WHEN AGNON chose to reveal to his readers the secret of writing stories, he mentioned first his affection for language, and it is certainly true that his painstaking concern for words plays a large part in the originality of his art. During a conversation with Agnon last year in Jerusalem, I mentioned to him the often unpredictable struggle with the medium of words that Virginia Woolf speaks of in *A Writer's Diary*. Agnon nodded, then told me about a short story he had written over forty years ago called "The Outcast." It had begun, he explained, as a full-scale tetralogy, but the more he worked it, the more the scheme shrank, until he finished with just sixty pages of Hebrew print. "I couldn't carry out the original plan," Agnon concluded, "because at that time my language wasn't adequate for the task." If language in general tends to be a clumsy instrument for the demanding requirements of human expression, modern Hebrew, as a language that has barely advanced beyond the stage of its own rebirth, is clumsier than most. What Agnon has done through the years is to create a Hebrew of his own that has come to fit his particular needs of expression with extraordinary precision. It is about as different from the Hebrew spoken in Israel today as Elizabethan English from modern colloquial American—though one is likely now to hear occasional archaic turns of speech among literate Israelis which, one suspects, have come straight out of Agnon.

In a satire written a few years ago on the politics and bureaucracy of the new state, Agnon apologized for not representing the speeches of the state's leaders in their own special shade of purple prose. "[Instead] I've put down their words in my own language, an easy and simple language, the language of the generations that came before us and of the generations that will come after us as well." Far from being a deliberately perverse literary anachronism, Agnon's older Hebrew comes largely from his desire to avoid the provincialism in time from which so much of modern culture—and particularly Israeli culture—suffers. Though he has fashioned his language from many sources, the Hebrew he writes has a predominantly medieval flavor, and is essentially the Hebrew of the Mishnah, and even more, of the Midrash.

The term "medieval" may give the wrong impression to an English reader because there is really no analogue among the Western languages to the body of Hebrew upon which Agnon draws. As one goes back in the history of English, for example, diction tends to become more elaborate and ornate until the Tudor period; before that, it begins to take on in most cases the wooden, rough-hewn appearance of a relatively undeveloped language. The Hebrew of the Midrash, on the other hand, does not suffer from either old-fashioned elaborateness or primitive crudeness. The style of this great medieval collection of homiletical and legendary variations on Biblical themes is a simple, evenly-controlled mode of diction (and consequently Agnon's own style can be deceptively "easy and simple"), but it possesses a peculiar lyric grace, and its flexibility of syntax and breadth of vocabulary make it capable of representing fine nuances of feeling.

Midrashic Hebrew is, moreover, much closer to the modern Hebrew reader than its fifteen-hundred-year history would suggest. The source books in which it is used have been traditionally studied from childhood on with the sort of application that

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would make them as familiar to the cultivated reader of Hebrew today as, say, *Pilgrim's Progress* once was to English schoolchildren. Agnon's Hebrew stands with the readers for whom it is intended on a footing of old and intimate acquaintance, in all its archaic accoutrement. It has a distinctive poetic charm that necessarily disappears in translation; and because of the deliberate simplicity of the style, Agnon in English is likely to look rather wan and anemic.

THROUGHOUT HIS long career, Agnon has had the perfectionist's passion for polishing and repolishing his style which is associated in European literature with figures like Flaubert and Joyce. Agnon may write a story, lock it up in a drawer, and let it sit for ten or fifteen years until he is ready, then take it out, rework it, and finally publish it. At present he has nearly four hundred pages of two different novels that have appeared in progress in various periodicals over the past ten years; there is no way of knowing whether he has actually finished either book or when he will decide to let any more chapters get into print. Today, at the age of seventy-two, he continues to follow an active work schedule, is still a vigorous experimenter, and even now he will on occasion make stylistic revisions of stories he published thirty years ago.

But Agnon is no more a Hebrew Flaubert than he is a Hebrew Kafka. In his own concern for language there is one major distinguishing element: the Hebrew he writes is for him not merely a language (*lashon*) but the Holy Language (*l'shon ha-kodesh*). He naturally connects affection for the language with love of the holy; for, like generations of Jews before him, Agnon regards Hebrew as the Jew's indispensable means of entrance into the sphere of sanctity. His stylistic perfectionism partly derives from his feeling that as a Hebrew writer he is a kind of guardian of sacred vessels who must protect them from every possible contamination. It is through the direct continuity which he preserves in his style with the Hebrew of the past that he is able to maintain a grip on the spiritual vision of the past. Even in the darkest corners of his nightmare world, the language he uses becomes a safeguard of sanity, a constant testimony of the continuing strength of traditional values.

In his last published volume of stories, there is a striking account of a father and daughter who are forced to flee their home after anonymous enemies have destroyed their house and all their possessions. The father asks the little daughter (who in Agnon's symbolic scheme represents the soul) if she knows what the Hebrew letters *aleph bet* spell. She answers correctly that they form the word *av* (father). The father then tells her: "You see, my darling, two little letters stand in the prayerbook as if they were all alone; they come together and make *av*. And not only these letters, but all the letters when they are joined make words, and the words form prayers, and the prayers rise up before our Father in heaven who gives ear and listens to the voice of our supplication." For Agnon this alphabet alone —the Hebrew of tradition in which he writes—is the alphabet of holiness. It was the instrument through which the sanctity of the past was expressed and preserved; it is what enables him to hold on to a sense of that sanctity and to recreate it in his writing, even when he is most intensely aware of the chaotic and threatening aspects of the world he lives in.

Together with the words of tradition, Agnon has adopted for his own uses a wide variety of motifs and symbols from this religious—and fundamentally poetical—literature. In effect he has found in it the solution to a problem that has typically concerned modern writers beginning with Yeats, Eliot, and Joyce: the need for a living body of mythology from which the artist can draw symbols meaningful to his audience to use in his own work. Agnon discovered a virtually untapped reservoir of symbolic richness in Jewish tradition, and, most particularly, in the Midrash. His development of traditional motifs endows his vision with an unusual poetic coherence, even over the apparently ambling stretches of some of his longer novels. A novel by Agnon is likely to prove to be, among other things, an extended variation on several symbolic themes, frequently themes he has taken from the Midrash.

A well-known Midrashic legend, for example, represents the people of Israel in exile as a prince (that is, God's son) who has been transformed by sorcery into a dog and who must suffer in this state until a re-

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deemer will restore him to his original regal figure. Agnon's novel, *Wayfarer Stopped for the Night* (1940), which deals with the physical and spiritual destruction of East European Jewry, elaborates on this theme with great effectiveness. At the very beginning of the book, the narrator sees a plaque upon which the name of a Polish king had been inscribed in gold; the plaque is now broken, the letters are tarnished, and blood-red weeds have sprung up over them. Everywhere the vestiges of majesty are trampled on. The inhabitants of the war-ruined Galician town in which the story takes place refuse to regard themselves as anything better than animals—and rather pitiful animals at that. "The greatest of all evils," reflects the narrator, "is when a prince forgets he is a prince." And so the theme is reiterated and developed throughout the novel.

To cite a somewhat different use of symbolic source material, the story called "The Orchestra," which appeared last year in COMMENTARY, achieves its poetic unity through the manipulation of contrasting imagery of light and darkness. Several key references (which someone reading the story in Hebrew would be more likely to notice) are from verses in Psalms: the associations made by the Psalmist of light-God-salvation and darkness-trouble-death are recalled at critical points. The little girl in the story has a name that means light, the old woman's name suggests darkness. As soon as the little girl leaves the narrator, the old lady approaches. It is quite probable that, in addition to the light-imagery from Psalms, Agnon had in mind the symbolic use of light in the lore of the Cabbala, where human existence is conceived as a struggle to redeem the scattered sparks of the broken divine effulgence from the envelopes of darkness in which they are imprisoned.

In some cases, Agnon's knowledge of Jewish tradition has served merely as a source for his own symbolic imagination, and he brings his final creative product very far indeed from its literary antecedents. The story "Forevermore"—which appears elsewhere in this issue—seems to reflect such a process in operation. The germinal idea for the story's symbolic use of the lepers is in all probability a passage in the Midrash Bereshith Rabba, commenting on the verse from Psalms, "Make me not the reproach of the base." The Midrash explains the verse as a plea to God by the Jews that He keep the other peoples from singling them out in their exile with the reproach, "Are you not a nation of lepers?" But in the story Agnon develops an original and complete fantasy from the image of the Jews as a people of lepers. I say fantasy, because the writer has gone out of his way to stress the quality of bizarreness and in this way to remind us that the reality of the story is a product of the imagination. He achieves this effect through the wilfully bizarre details of the Book of Gumlidata, and, more generally, through the peculiar impression he creates by beginning all proper names in the story with one of two letters. The Hebrew consonants *ayin* and *gimel* are the first two letters of Agnon's own last name, so the exclusion of all names that begin with other letters is a means of asserting that the happenings of the story exist peculiarly within the domain of its author's imagination. But what is most remarkable about "Forevermore" is the way its central symbol embodies in a single image the two contradictory elements of a highly paradoxical attitude toward Judaism. On the one hand, the lepers are prisoners of a living death. Their parchment book that tells the glory and destruction of an ancient city is befouled by the suppurations of its diseased readers. Yet it is only among the lepers and from their book that Adiel Amzeh finds the truth.

IT IS INDICATIVE of Agnon's originality as an artist that he has drawn from so many sources and yet managed to avoid making his work into a literary pastiche. A sound creative insight led him to choose from the tradition what was most appropriate for his personal needs of expression. For example, in an autobiographical story entitled "The Kerchief," Agnon creates a memorable portrait of family love and moral coming of age by building on a single comment of Rashi's on a verse in the Book of Lamentations. The verse is, "How is she [Jerusalem] become as a widow!" Rashi points out that Scripture does not say "a widow," but "as a widow" —"like a woman whose husband has gone to some far-off place but with the intention of returning to her." The absence of the boy's father is identified with the absence of

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God from the Land of Israel. The mother sits at the window waiting for her husband's return, like Jerusalem waiting for its redeemer, and the boy has childish imaginations about the advent of the Messiah. Every night he tries to fall asleep with one ear open in case the ram's horn of redemption should sound before morning. But the boy has to discover that a genuine sense of the Messiah's coming—like the feeling of the family when the father finally arrives home—is only to be had by learning to face the most repellent sufferings of human life in the unredeemed world.

When, by contrast, Agnon takes young love as his theme in "Nights"—his stay in Jaffa from 1908 to 1913 is the background for his story—he adopts a rich lyric prose filled with reminiscences of the language of the Song of Songs. This haunting love story is a kind of extended prose-poem, luxuriant with the floral imagery of the Bible's great love poem. Agnon can even adopt so unlikely a form as the moralistic parable and turn it to his own artistic purposes. One of the recurrent concerns of his writing is the struggle—and the general failure—of the individual conscience to carry out its own moral responsibilities. He dramatizes this struggle with great effectiveness in a parable called "The Garment"—the story of a tailor who postpones making a garment commissioned by a great lord, stains the fabric while eating at his worktable, and finally drowns when he tries to wash the ruined material in the river. "The lord has many garments and he can afford to do without one of them. But the tailor who spoiled the garment made with material from the lord's workshop—what will he answer and what will he say when they ask him where is the garment?" Agnon does with the parable what the great Hasidic teachers might have done if they had been masters of Hebrew prose.

BUT OF ALL his achievements in adapting the materials of Jewish tradition to his own means of expression, the most important has been his remarkable success in weaving the legendary tapestry of the medieval Midrash into the texture of the 20th-century world lived in and experienced by Shmuel Yosef Agnon. One significant instance of this process is his treatment of the theme of the house. Perhaps the greatest single concern in Agnon's writings is the problem of modern man who, spiritually, finds himself with no place to live. The comment made by the hero of Agnon's short novel *Till Now* might serve as an epigraph for the author's collected works. "I'll tell you the story of a man who has neither house nor room, who left the place he did have and lost the one he found. And so he goes from one place to another, looking for a place for himself."

By a strange double coincidence, Agnon has had two experiences in his own life paradigmatic of the violent destruction of order which has been such an important element in the history of our times. In 1924, when the Hebrew writer was living in Hamburg, his house burned down, and everything he owned went up in the flames, including his library of four thousand books and the manuscript of an autobiographical novel (which he never attempted to begin again). The suddenness and totality of the loss shocked Agnon profoundly. Within five years, the same thing was to happen to him again. This time it was his home in Jerusalem that was ravaged, and the agents of destruction were the Arab rioters in the Palestine pogroms of 1929.

In any case, the typical subject for Agnon's stories since the 30's is that of the dispossessed—the physically, culturally, and most important, spiritually dispossessed. Typically, the enemy has destroyed a man's house. In one story we may encounter him on the road, running away. Or, in others, he may be on a bus or train or ship that will not take him where he wants to go. There are no vacancies when he looks for an apartment, or he is unable to find the address he wants, or the house is locked and he has no way of getting in. The house he once lived in—the solid, ordered structure of an older way of life—has been knocked to pieces, and he finds himself a radically displaced person in a world without homes.

This subject is hardly a unique one in 20th-century fiction, but Agnon's conception of the dispossessed is distinctive because it connects the image of homeless man with the complex of symbols and ideas bound up in the idea of *galut* (exile) enunciated in the literature of Jewish tradition. The Midrash characteristically portrays *galut* as the

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banishing of a prince from his father's palace (the Land of Israel) to live in a series of makeshift huts. (For this reason Agnon, the would-have-been Levite, builds himself a "small shelter" to recall the glory of his father's house.) The Midrash intended to instill in those who studied it a deep realization that any house until the time of redemption was only a temporary and flimsy shelter. *Galut* is not simply a matter of geographical displacement. When the people of Israel went into exile, the Divine Presence was said to have gone into exile as well. The notion of *galut*, in other words, includes the idea of a whole world order out of kilter, with even God out of his appropriate place. Or as the Cabbalists poignantly put it, it was not Israel alone that was in *galut*, but the world was in *galut*, and the world had to be redeemed if Israel was to be redeemed.

The Midrash in this way gives Agnon not only the language and images with which to represent the state of homelessness of modern man, but also a way to interpret this distressing phenomenon. Jewish tradition always opposes to the hut of exile the image of the house that was, which is also the image of the house that will be; the dark reality of exile is confronted in the unswerving belief in a redemption to follow the exile. There are moments in Agnon's stories when his dispossessed protagonists seem on the point of being wholly submerged by the forces that threaten them, but, in general, what distinguishes Agnon from an uprooted Jew like Kafka is the fact that he can honestly (and convincingly) envisage a restoration of the shattered order, a rebuilding of the ruined house. Agnon in his writings has confronted the most disturbing aspects of the contemporary world, and he is too shrewd, too tough-minded an observer to be capable of deceiving himself about such matters. Yet by remaining constantly in touch—both in his art and in his private life—with the spiritual wholeness of the past, he has preserved the conviction that such wholeness of spirit is both indispensable to man and still possible for man to achieve. Agnon is able, then, to conclude his visions of disaster on a note of affirmation. It is not a loud or insistent note: it seems to waver somewhere between the reliance of faith and the devout hope of prayer. But the modest affirming voice has the ring of authenticity, and in these "war days," as Agnon often designates the last half-century, it is a rare and precious sound.

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S. Y. AGNON

FOREVERMORE

A Story

FOR TWENTY YEARS Adiel Amzeh worked on his history of the great city of Gumlidata, the pride of mighty nations until it was reduced to dust and ashes by the Gothic hordes and its people enslaved.

After he had gathered all his researches together, examined and tested them, sorted, edited, and arranged them, he decided that his work was finally ready for publication and he sat down and wrote the book he had planned for so many years. He took the book and made the rounds of the publishers but without success. He looked about for patrons and benefactors but had no luck. During all the years he had been occupied with his research he had not taken the trouble to ingratiate himself with the learned men of the universities—nor with their wives and daughters—and now when he came to them seeking a favor, their eyes shone with such cold anger that their glasses seemed to warp. "Who are you, sir?" they said to him. "We've never seen you before." Amzeh shrugged his shoulders and went away disappointed and dejected. He understood that in order to be recognized he would have to become friendly with them and he had no idea of how to go about it. Many years of painstaking research had made him a slave to his work from dawn till night, neglectful of all worldly cares. When he left his bed in the morning, his feet would carry him to the desk, his hands would pick up pen and paper, and his eyes, if not pursuing some obscure vision, would plunge into a book or into maps and sketches of the city and its great battles; and when he lay down to sleep he would go over his notebooks again, sometimes consciously, sometimes hardly realizing what he was doing. Years passed and his book remained unpublished. You know, a scholar who is unable to publish his work often benefits from the delay, since he can re-examine his assumptions and correct his errors, testing those hypotheses that may seem far from historical reality and truth.

Finally, when he had despaired of ever seeing the results of his work in print, his luck took a turn for the better. Gebhard Goldenthal, the richest man in the city, informed him that he would publish the book. How did it happen that the name of a humble scholar had reached the ear of this famous rich man? And why would such an eminent personage want to publish a work which was sure to bring no profit? Some said he felt so uneasy about his great wealth that he had decided to become a patron of learning in order to salve his conscience. He followed closely the world of scholarship and somehow had heard the story of Adiel Amzeh's book. According to another explanation, Gebhard Goldenthal secretly believed that his ancestors were among the unhappy people who were driven out of Gumlidata, that they had belonged to the city's aristocracy and that one of them had been an army general, the head of the palace guard. Of course, this was obviously untrue since Gumlidata was destroyed during the first wave of the Gothic invasions when the whole civilized world was turned upside down. No person can say with any certainty that he is a

Two stories by S. Y. AGNON appeared in our October 1960 number. "Forevermore" was translated by Joel Blocker and will soon appear in a collection of Israeli stories, edited by Mr. Blocker for Schocken Books. Schocken is also bringing out a new volume of Agnon's stories in Israel, which will include the present work, in the original Hebrew.

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descendant of the exiles of Gumlidata. But whatever the reason, Gebhard Goldenthal was ready to publish Adiel Amzeh's book, even though printing this kind of work would involve many extra expenses. Several colored maps were necessary, requiring many expensive colors: one for a general view of the city, another for its temples, a third for its sacrificial altars; a different color for each of its gods—Gomesh, Gush, Gutz, Guach, and Guz; one for the founding mothers of the city, one for its apostates, another for Gomed the Great, one for Gichur and Amul—the twin pillars of prayer—and one each for all the remaining holy men, the priests and priestesses, not to mention the temple prostitutes and the dogs and all the saints—for each and every one a different color, to denote position and function. Add to all these the Goths and their allies, their carts and wagons, their weapons and battle defenses, and you can see how much money was needed to print such a work. Nevertheless, Gebhard Goldenthal was ready to publish the book and make it a fine volume with beautiful printing and good paper, carefully detailed maps, expensive binding—perfect in every respect. His staff had already consulted with illustrators, engravers, and printers, and all that remained was for the author and publisher to meet, for in all his business affairs Gebhard Goldenthal would allow his staff to take care of the preliminaries, but the final arrangements had to be conducted between the client and the head of the business himself. If the client was unknown, he would be invited to Goldenthal's office; if the man was recognized in his field, he might be invited for a cup of tea to Goldenthal's home; and if he was important, he would be invited for dinner. Adiel Amzeh, who was more than a nobody but not well-known enough to be considered important, was invited by the rich man for a cup of tea.

So it was that one day Adiel Amzeh received an invitation for afternoon tea at the home of Gebhard Goldenthal. He was asked to be prompt and come at the designated hour since Mr. Goldenthal was soon leaving for abroad and was pressed for time.

An author who for years has searched without avail for a publisher is not likely to be late for an appointment with the one he has finally found. Almost before he put down his publisher's invitation, he took out his best suit of clothes—untouched since the day he received his doctor's degree—shook it out and pressed it. He hurried back and forth from his manuscript to the bathroom, from his bath to a store where he bought a new tie, and from the store back home to look over his book again. By morning of the day of his appointment, he had made all his preparations for his visit to the publisher. Never in his life had he experienced such a day as this. Adiel Amzeh, who for the sake of a city's destruction had put aside all personal affairs, who cared nothing for clothes or any human vanity, was utterly changed. He had become like most celebrated learned men who neglect their work for the sake of the honor they receive from others who know nothing of learning and scholarship. He sat and stared at his manuscript, rose and inspected himself in the mirror, glanced at his watch, examined his clothes, and rehearsed his gestures. This is the regimen of all who wish to meet with a rich man. You must preen yourself and be careful of your demeanor and graces: the rich, even those who honor learning, prefer to honor it when it comes wrapped in a pleasing mantle. Yet that same love of learning which had used up so much of his energy and strength, furrowing his brow and bowing his shoulders, had touched his face with a special kind of radiance that one doesn't find except among those who are truly devoted to seeking wisdom. It's a pity Goldenthal never actually set eyes upon him; had he done so he might have realized that a pleasant and happy face can be shaped from things other than money. But you see, my friend, for the sake of a little moralizing, I have gone and given away the ending at the very beginning of my story.

Well, Amzeh sat for a while, then got up, sat down again, rose again—all the time thinking of the future when the printer would take up his manuscript and transform it into attractive pages; he thought of how he would correct proofs, add and delete, omit and include certain passages; of how the printer does his work and how his book would finally be published and received. Sitting there dreaming he might have missed the appointed hour, except that all the years he had devoted to his work had

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sharpened him in his external affairs as well. When the moment came for him to leave for his appointment, he jumped up from his chair, picked up his house key, and made ready to leave and lock the door behind him. He stared at himself in the mirror once more and glanced about his home, astonished that his house had not changed as he had. There ought to have been some transformation, he thought, for this would have been only just for a man who was about to undergo a blessed metamorphosis.

At that moment, he heard the sound of footsteps and suddenly became alarmed. Perhaps Mr. Goldenthal had to leave before the appointed time and someone was coming to tell him the interview had been postponed. Amzeh stood transfixed and could hardly catch his breath; his reason was gone, only his senses functioned. His entire body seemed to become one big ear. As he listened intently to the footsteps, he realized that he was hearing the slow shuffling of an old woman. In a moment, his powers of reason returned and he understood that a gentleman like Goldenthal would not send an old woman to deliver a note canceling their appointment. When the sound of the old woman's footsteps came closer, he recognized them as those of a nurse who visited him once each year in order to collect journals and illustrated magazines to take to the inmates of the lepers' hospital where she worked. It was difficult for Amzeh to put the old woman off by telling her he was busy and asking that she come the following year; he had high regard for this nurse who devoted her entire life to those whose existence was a living death. But it was equally hard for him to tarry on her account, for if he was delayed, with Mr. Goldenthal about to go abroad and no one knowing when he would return, then the publication of his book would also be postponed. I should mention another factor as well, which might seem unimportant but perhaps was decisive. To a man whose home is his whole universe, every unnecessary article in the house can cause annoyance. So it was with our scholar. When his mind was occupied with Gumlidata and he strolled through its ruins carrying on long conversations with the priests and holy men of the temple, he would occasionally raise his eyes and notice a pile of dusty old magazines. Now that the old woman had come, here was an opportunity to get rid of them; if he didn't act now, they would accumulate and gather dust for another year.

At the very moment when he was deciding what to do, whether to get rid of the superfluous volumes or to devote all his efforts to his own book, the old woman knocked on the door. He opened it and greeted her. The old woman understood immediately that he was worried and preoccupied, like a man uncertain whether to take an affirmative or negative course. "I see, Herr Doctor," she said, "that I have come at an inconvenient time. I'll leave and go about my business."

He was silent for a moment and didn't answer her. When she finally turned to go, he realized how tired the old woman must be from her long walk. After all, the lepers' home was far from the city, and she had to come on foot. She was unable to travel by autobus for fear that if recognized she would be thrown off—most people are still terrified by the sight of someone who works with lepers.

"I'm sorry," Amzeh said to her as she was about to go, "but I can't take care of you the way I would like. I have been invited to afternoon tea by Gebhard Goldenthal, the famous industrialist whose name you have probably heard." (As a matter of fact, forty years previously Gebhard Goldenthal had courted the nurse and wanted to marry her, but she refused him because she had already given her heart to God's maimed, the poor prisoners of the lepers' home.) "I have a very important matter to discuss with Mr. Goldenthal," Adiel Amzeh went on. "I'll be back in an hour or so. Please sit down until I return, and later I'll fill your basket with books and journals and pamphlets and anything else I have about—they take up so much room here I can hardly breathe."

"I would like to sit here and wait for you, Herr Doctor," the old woman answered, "but I can't leave my good people for more than a short while. They are used to me and I am used to them, and when I'm away from them I miss them as much as they miss me. They are used to receiving all their needs from me. I'll go now, Herr Doctor, and if God grants me life and peace, I'll come back next year."

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But Amzeh was unable to let her go away like that, without an explanation of why he was in such a hurry. Without thinking about how little time he had, he began to explain: "Perhaps you have noticed my appearance today. For many years you have been coming to visit me and you have always found me with slippers on my feet and a cap on my head, unshaven, my collar open, my hair disheveled. Today I'm dressed in a good suit and wearing shoes and a hat and a nice tie. The reason for the change is simple: for twenty years I have worked on a book and it is finally ready for publication. Mr. Gebhard Goldenthal has decided to publish it, and I'm now going to see him. He's waiting for me and for my book."

A flush came over the old woman's face. "You mustn't delay a moment, Herr Doctor, hurry, hurry, don't wait, an hour like this doesn't come every day, don't put off even a minute what you have waited for for many years. It is good that you found Mr. Goldenthal. He's an honest man. He keeps his promises. But I'm not a very good friend, intruding on you at a time like this. I remember when I began to serve in the lepers' hospital, the rooms were full of dust and broken beds and chairs, the roof was caved in, the walls tottering and moldy. If he hadn't given us money to put the place together again, to buy new beds and equipment and make all the necessary repairs, it would have been impossible to get along there."

After the old woman had recounted all of Gebhard Goldenthal's good deeds, she let out a deep sigh. "Are you unhappy?" Adiel Amzeh asked her. "Unhappy?" she replied with a shy smile. "I've never been unhappy." He was quiet for a moment. "You are unique, nurse Eden, you are the only one in the world who can make such a declaration," he said.

The old woman blushed with confusion. "I really should correct what I just said, Herr Doctor. I have had great unhappiness, but not of my own making." Her face turned scarlet and she lapsed into silence.

"You stopped right in the middle of what you were saying, nurse Adeh," Amzeh said, "and perhaps at the crucial point. I'm certain it would be worthwhile to hear."

"Worthwhile?" the old woman cried, stammering in her effort to speak quickly. "How do we know what is worthwhile and what isn't? I'm an old woman whose grave is waiting for her—let me boast once that I told the whole truth. I flattered myself falsely when I said that I've never been unhappy. On the contrary, I haven't known a day without sorrow, a sorrow greater than that of my good people who suffer more than any other creatures in the world. For the merciful God who inflicts suffering on man provides him with the strength to withstand his woes; but if one is healthy and without physical disability, then he has no special allotment of strength, and when he looks on those who suffer and on their pain he is chastened and has nothing with which to withstand his sorrow. And especially someone like myself, who has to look after the suffering ones. I'm always afraid that I won't fulfill my obligations, that I don't devote enough of my time to the good people. Even if I leave them for a moment, their suffering does not leave me. . . . But I'm talking too much. I've forgotten that you are in a hurry. Now I'll be going. I hope, Herr Doctor, that your business will bring you a full life and peace. Only pity the poor people who must see me return empty-handed, without any books."

"Why pity them?" he asked, facing her. "Have they finished all the books? They've read them all?"

"They've read them hundreds of times," answered the old woman.

"What kind of books do they have?"

"Oh, I can give you the names of all of them."

"All of them? Surely you're exaggerating."

"No, there aren't very many. I've been there so many years, every article and every book is familiar to me."

The old woman then recited the name of each book in the hospital library. "Not many, not very many at all," Amzeh said after she had finished. "I can imagine how happy they must be to receive a new book. But," he went on, jokingly, "I'm sure you have forgotten one or two, and perhaps they were the best books of the lot. For that's the way we are—we always forget the most important thing. Isn't that so, nurse Adeh?"

The old woman smiled. "I have no love of dialectics. But I must say for truth's sake that there isn't a book in our library

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that I haven't mentioned—except for one, which is hardly worth discussing, since it isn't read any more."

"Why isn't it read any more?"

"Why? Because it has decayed with age, and on account of the tears."

"On account of the tears?"

"Because of the tears, yes, because of the tears that every reader of the book shed on its pages after reading the awful tales it contains."

"What are these terrible stories?"

"I don't know what they are," the old woman answered. "Whatever I know I've told you already. It's an old, worn-out book, written on parchment. They say it was written more than a thousand years ago. Had I known you would ask, I would have made inquiries. There are still old men in the hospital who can tell the story, which I remember many years ago the old men before them used to tell with tears—the same story that is in the book. But they say that even then, years ago, the old men already had difficulty in reading the book because its pages were torn and the words blurred. The manuscript is a heap of moldy, decayed matter. There have been many requests to burn it. In my time one of the caretakers was all set to destroy it, but I asked him to return it. I told him that a book which had found shelter with us mustn't be treated like a dog. I believe, Herr Doctor, that a piece of work done by an artist gives joy to the creator as long as it endures."

"Tell me, nurse Adeh," Amzeh said, mulling over the old woman's words, "perhaps you have heard something about the contents of the book. What do your old men say about it? I'm sure if they say anything at all, they must know more."

"I've heard that all its pages are of parchment," the old woman answered. "As far as what is written in it, I've heard that it contains the history of a city which was destroyed and disappeared from the face of the earth."

"A city which had been destroyed and disappeared from the world!" Amzeh repeated excitedly. "Please tell me, nurse Eden, perhaps you have heard the name of the city?"

"Yet, I have heard the name. The name of the city is Gumlidata, yes, Gumlidata is the name."

"What? what? what?" Amzeh stammered, his tongue caught in his mouth. "Have . . . have . . . you heard the name correctly . . .? Gum . . . Gum . . . Gumli . . . lidata . . . you said. Please, my good nurse, tell me again, what is the name of the city you mentioned? Guml. . . ."

She repeated what she had said. "Gumlidata is the name of the city, and the book is an account of its history."

ADIEL AMZEH grasped a table in front of him, leaning forward so that he would not collapse and fall. The old woman noticed his sudden paling and moved to help him. "What is the trouble, Herr Doctor," she said staring at him, "are you ill? Is it your heart?"

He straightened up and pulled himself together. "It's nothing, my good nurse," he began with a smile, "there's nothing wrong with me. On the contrary, you have given me new life. Let me tell you about it. For twenty years I have devoted myself to the history of this same city. There isn't a piece of paper which mentions the city's name that I haven't read. If I were a king, I could build the city anew, just as it was before its destruction. If you want, I'll tell you about the historical trips I have taken. I have walked in the city's markets, strolled in its streets and alleys, seen its palaces and temples. Oh, my good nurse, what headaches I've suffered from the walks I've taken there. And I know how it was destroyed, who took part in the destruction, the name of each and every tribe that helped reduce it to ruins, how many were killed by the sword, how many died of starvation and thirst, and how many perished from the plague that followed the war. I know everything except one detail—from which side Gediton's brigades entered the city, whether from the side of the great bridge which was called the Bridge of Valor, or whether they entered secretly by way of the Valley of Aphardat, that is, the Valley of the Cranes . . . the plural of crane in the language of Gumlidata is *aphardat*; the word does not mean ravens or chestnut trees or overshoes as some linguists believe. As a matter of fact, 'raven' in the language of Gumlidata is *eldag* and in the plural *elgadata,* since when the letters 'd' and 'g' come together in the plural they change their order. I don't

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know the words for chestnut trees or overshoes in the language of Gumlidata. I really don't know what they are."

SUDDENLY HIS expression changed, his voice dropped, his lips twisted, and he let out a hoarse, stuttering laugh. His knees began to shake and he pinched his mouth. "I'm surprised at you, nurse Adeh," he said, "after all, you are an intelligent woman. You should be more careful about what you say. How can you believe something which doesn't make any sense. How can you say that your hospital possesses a book containing the history of Gumlidata. Gumlidata was destroyed in the days of the first Gothic invasions. And you say that a book from these ancient times has come down to our day, and the old people in the hospital have read it. Now really, my dear nurse, how can you reconcile this kind of nonsense with simple reality? How could a book like this ever get to the hospital . . . to the hospital which you, my dear nurse, serve so well. . . . How? How? Pardon me, my dear Adinah, if I tell you that this is a very doubtful story. You have heard a silly old folk tale and it has enchanted you with its romance. Or perhaps you have confused Gumlidata with . . . with . . . I don't know with what city you might have confused Gumlidata. What did you hear about this manuscript? How did it get to the hospital? You have made me curious, my dear lady, very curious for more information. I feel just like a psychoanalyst. Aren't you surprised at me, the author of a book myself, being so curious about someone else's book? It's not enough that my house is filled with books, I must go looking for others. Let me tell you, just between us, all these books in my cabinet are not there for reading, they're there for effect. And if you want, I'll tell you the real reason: self-preservation. People see the books and start talking about them, and I don't have to discuss my own work with them. Please tell me, though, how did this history of Gumlidata ever get to your hospital?"

"I haven't read the book," answered the nurse Adeh Eden, "and when it was taken out of the reading room some time ago I forgot it. I don't devote much time to books generally. When I come to your house for books, it's not for myself, of course, but for the sake of my good people, in order to ease their suffering. Sometimes books can do that. As for the parchment pages, I remember how surprised I was when I first saw them about forty years ago—like most nurses, I had to know everything about every article I saw where I worked. An old man noticed that the volume of parchment interested me and he told me what he had heard about the book. I still remember a little of what he said. If old age hasn't confused my memory, I'll try to pass on his story. May I sit down and tell you what I heard?"

Amzeh was suddenly embarrassed. "My God!" he cried out in confusion. "How could I let you stand all this time! Sit down, do sit down . . . here, on this chair. Not that one, this chair over here . . . it is the most comfortable one in my house. Please sit down and tell me your story."

The old woman sat down in the chair that he brought her, gathered up the folds of her dress, clasped her hands together, and, taking a deep breath, began. "As far as I can remember, this is the story. After the Gothic hordes had conquered the great city of Gumlidata and reduced its strength to dust, they found the tyrant ruler of the city, Count Gifayon Glaskinon Gitra'al, of the house of Giara'al, just as he was about to flee. He moaned and wept and pleaded for his life, asking that he be made a slave to their nation and their king, Alaric. The Goths allowed him to live, and carried him off with them as a slave. He had with him a history which contained stories of the city's might and valor, stories that used to be read before the time of Alaric the King. On the way he fell sick, and the Goths left him for dead and went on. He wandered about in the fields until some lepers, who were following the soldiers for scraps of food and clothing, came upon him. They took pity on him, released him from his chains, and nursed him until he regained his health. He soon realized who his saviors were and began to groan and curse, declaring that death was better than life with the lepers. For in those days a leper was looked upon as a dead man and anyone who came in contact with an untouchable was himself considered to be infected. They tried to comfort him by saying that if he went away he might fall into the hands of the Goths

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and their allies who would surely kill him, or else he might be waylaid by roving packs of wild beasts who would surely eat him alive; but if he stayed with them he would be saved from the punishments of both men and beasts and have food to sustain him. They took him to their camp and gave him a bundle of straw to carry, so that if he were approached by a healthy man he might warn him away by shaking the straw, and they hung a small cup about his neck, for merciful people would sometimes throw scraps of food to the sick.

"He lived with them for some time, eating what they ate and drinking what they drank. He saw how well they treated him and began to repay them in kind. On long winter nights he would read to them from his book, entertaining them with stories of the great city of Gumlidata and tales of his ancestors, the tyrant counts who governed over Gumlidata and its dependencies. In time, both the Count and his benefactors died. No trace remained of them except the book. Men live and die, but their instruments remain and live on. The Count's friends died, but their place was taken by a new generation. They discovered the book and read it from cover to cover, joining their tears to those of the first generation. After many generations the world began to change and people began to realize how great was the suffering of the lepers, how difficult and terrible their ordeal. Not only was their sickness a great tribulation, but they were forced to live in forests and deserts and wander about in search of food. And there were times during the hard winter days when they had no sustenance and were unable to beg for food and they simply died of starvation. Eventually, benevolent groups were formed and a shelter established for the lepers, where they were brought together and their needs taken care of. Herr Doctor, I doubt whether there is anyone else in the world who knows more than I have told you about these sheets of parchment. But you want to leave. I hope you aren't late for your appointment."

"No, I'm not late for my appointment," answered Adiel Amzeh. "In fact, this is only the beginning of my appointment. Take a little more time, sit a little while longer, and we'll fill our hands with books and take them to the good people. Sit where you are, nurse, sit a while and forget about my book. My book is used to waiting." Amzeh went over to the cabinets lining his walls and began to take books down. When he had accumulated a large pile, he tied them up in packages. He took down more books, muttering: "They'll enjoy them, they'll enjoy these books." Several times he repeated the process, searching and ransacking his shelves, whispering and muttering all the time, "What shall I give? What shall I give?" If the old woman had not stayed his hand, he would have taken all his books from their shelves and given them to her.

"You take a bundle and I'll take a bundle," he said when he had finished, "and we'll deliver them to your patients. As for Mr. . . . as for Mr. what's-his-name . . . Mr. Goldenthal, Gebhard Goldenthal, who is waiting for me to come, well, I'm sure he will find something else to occupy himself with. And now, my dear Adeh Eden, let's hurry so that we arrive before the sun sets, and you will open the gate for me and take me to see the book—the book of which you have spoken. What's the matter, nurse? Why do you make such a face? Don't you think they'll allow me to enter? We'll swear that I'm going to visit my mother, and if they don't let me in I'll lie down on the steps of the hospital and won't move an inch until they say I can enter. Are you unhappy? Are you sorry about something? If it's because of me, don't be sorry. This is the most glorious day of my life, sweeter than any day I have ever lived, and what you have told me is sweeter than anything I have ever heard since . . . since . . . I'm really confused now, I don't know since when. Look, look, it's already going down. I mean the sun, the sun. The sun is more beautiful when it sets than when it rises. For twenty years a man must be hidden in the sun's shadow in order to be able to utter such a simple piece of wisdom."

They went out of the city, the two of them walking together, Amzeh in long strides, the old woman with short steps. He chattered as he walked, she managed every so often to bring forth a word which sounded more like a sigh. Everyone who passed by and recognized her stepped aside, and she avoided them as well; she knew these people were afraid of her and was careful not to

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arouse any unnecessary terror. But Adiel Amzeh was not conscious of the passers-by, avoiding them as they went along. He turned to his companion suddenly. "Do you remember whether I locked the door?" he asked. He put down his package and saw that the key was still in his hand. "I'm carrying the key with the package and am not conscious of what I'm doing," he said with a laugh. "It's because of the heaviness of the burden I have to bear." For a minute he was silent. Then he cried out, "My God!" with a mixture of impatience and reproach, for at the edge of his consciousness he saw himself reading the book of Gumlidata in the hospital and the faded words on the parchment prevented him from progressing quickly. Because of this book, too, he had forgotten his own book which he had worked on for twenty years, and he had forgotten Mr. Goldenthal who had agreed to publish it. After about an hour's walk, they arrived at the lepers' hospital.

I DON'T KNOW through which gate they entered or how much time it took before he was granted permission. And I can't describe the condition of the book itself, which was so covered with pus that even the lepers felt a loathing for it. I don't know all the details and have no love for suppositions. Let me put aside the doubtful and come back to what is certain.

Amzeh came to the house of the untouchables and after much argument he finally was allowed to enter. He went in and they tied him in an antiseptic apron which reached from his neck to his feet. They took the book out of the chest it was stored in, and gave it to him with a warning not to touch it. Amzeh stared at it until his eyes seemed to occupy half his face. He looked at it for a long time, then jumped up quickly to open it. They took hold of him and told him to wait. He was fitted with a pair of white gloves which they carefully tied so they would not fall off. Then they warned him again not to touch the book unless his hands were protected with gloves. They told him that only a simple-minded man would neglect such a warning. I don't know whether he heard them or not. This I do know: his eyes grew so large they seemed to cover his entire face—and half his neck as well. When they saw that he had somewhat regained his composure, they left, providing him with a place in the hospital garden among the trees which are known as the "Trees of Eden." Adiel Amzeh sat there and painstakingly read every letter, every word, column, and page which the book contained, the caretaker standing by his side and turning the pages as he progressed. For they were still afraid he was so excited that he would not exercise the necessary restraint. The book had been touched by the hands of many untouchables, and it seemed almost as if it were not written on parchment, but on the skin of a leper, and not ink but pus had been used to inscribe the words.

What more can I say? After he had carefully gone over every sentence in the book, he found the answer to the riddle that had troubled him for many years; how Gumlidata had been conquered, from which side of the city the first bands of the Goths had entered. For Gumlidata had been surrounded by a solid wall of stone and protected on all sides by natural fortifications. And so within a few short hours Amzeh solved the problem that had caused him so much trouble during his years of exhaustive research. For your sake, my friends, and for the sake of the whole House of Israel, let me tell you the story the dead words told our scholar. I'll try to summarize what was written there at great length.

The book of parchment told the story of one of the Hun women, a young girl named Geldag or Eldag, who one day left the camp of the Huns, the allies of the Goths, and rode about on a wild ass. She reached the cisterns behind the city of Gumlidata where she was caught and brought to the city. The servants of the tyrant, the old Count Gifayon Glaskinon Gitra'al of the house of Giara'al, grandfather of the young Count Gifayon Glaskinon Gitra'al Giara'al, noticed her and brought her for a gift to their master. She was horrified by the old man and his city, disgusted by his groaning and drooling, his narrow bed and his strange manners, and nauseated by the smell of the city and its sacrificial altars. She tried to flee at once, but was caught and returned to the Count. The same thing happened three or four more times; each time she was caught. Finally, she saw that escape

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was impossible and she sat brooding how to gain revenge on her captors.

At about the same time the girl was held captive, the Goths, with Gaditon the Brave at their head, rose up and waged war with Gumlidata. The city's inhabitants held the Goths in great terror, for they knew that every place the barbarians conquered they slaughtered and burned, and if Gumlidata was vanquished, their future was annihilation. The tyrant Count saw that his city was cut off from all help, and he fell into a deep, sorrowful melancholy. Had it not been for Eldag, the Hun girl, who had changed her ways and begun to show him a love and devotion he had known with no other woman, he probably would have died of his sorrow before the Goths had a chance to hang him.

When the court guards saw that Eldag had changed her attitude toward the Count, they ceased watching her as carefully as before. Eldag took advantage of the guards' carelessness and began to take long walks through the city, wandering about everywhere. She even visited the city wall near the Valley of the Cranes, which most people avoided for fear that it might collapse. Years before, an earthquake had struck the city and shaken the wall in several places. The citizens of Gumlidata were careful not to bother Eldag, for they knew that only the power of her charms had saved their king from melancholy. So enamored of the girl was their king that he had his tailors make her a mantle as a gift, a kind of priestly garment normally worn by a queen, woven with bands of calves' eyes arranged in the shape of the Valley of Cranes.

One day Eldag remained in the king's garden, playing with her wild ass among the tall trees. This ass was one of many animals in the garden, each of which had suckled at a woman's breast. For there was a strange custom in Gumlidata. If a woman conceived and it was not known who the father was, her relatives waited until she gave birth and then took the infant and brought it to these animals to be suckled. They looked for an animal that had recently given birth, and left the infant to be weaned, taking the animal's young to the human mother for suckling. If they could not find the child of a tame animal, they brought her the young of a wild one. They were most careful about the children of the noblewomen, *Givyatans* in their language, for if a noblewoman had given birth and the father was unknown, the infant was killed and the young of an animal was brought to the mother, so that her noble blood would not be mixed with the blood of the common people.

So Eldag played with her pet in the garden among the tall trees. She was quite unafraid of animals, having spent most of her life with them: her father, Gichul the Clown, was the owner of a dancing bear. A young ass saw them and began snorting and hee-hawing, as if in reproach. Eldag heard the young animal's cries. "An ass always sounds like an ass," she said with a laugh, "even if it has been suckled by a duchess. What is it you want? Do you want this mantle which covers my heart? Come and I will wrap round your neck an ornament more beautiful than any that has been worn by your noble wet-nurse." The young ass heard her and came close. She took her mantle from her bosom and tied it about the animal's throat, and made him bow his head as if in thanks, as she had seen Gothic noblemen do when they received gifts.

Suddenly the girl was overwhelmed with a deep longing for her home, her family, and her people. She was filled with a burning rage and her anger turned against the ass who had reminded her of her former happiness. She was angry at the ass because he was more faithful than she was: even after she had placed the gift around his neck, the ass continued to groan. She grabbed hold of him by the ears in order to strike him. The calves' eyes which had been woven into the mantle in the shape of the Valley of Cranes shone before her. Her heart began to beat wildly. She tried to gain control of herself so that she would not cry out and give away her plan. She forced herself to smile and dragged the ass to the city wall near the Valley of Cranes; there, she found the place which had collapsed during the earthquake and had not been completely repaired. She broke through the opening and pushed the ass with the mantle around his neck outside. And Eldag was happy, for she knew that if the Goths saw the ass, they would understand he had been sent as a sign that they should enter

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the city through the Valley of Cranes. She controlled her joy and returned to the old Count, assuming a happy countenance for him, his court, and his city. So charmed was the population by Eldag's grace and beauty that they forgot about the Gothic soldiers who were besieging their city.

The ass went out of the city and reached a nearby forest. His nose sniffed the odors of trees and flowers and he began to snort loudly like a wild ass who has returned to his home. The noise was heard by some Gothic soldiers. They were surprised to see the ass with the mantle around his neck, for they had never seen an animal adorned like this. They brought the animal to Gaditon, their general. Gaditon the Brave saw the mantle. "Is there a place known as the Valley of the Cranes?" he asked his soldiers. "Is there one of our people in Gumlidata?" Gichul the Clown was brought to the general, and he told him that his daughter had disappeared. He saw the ass and the strange ornament it wore, and he knew that it was his daughter's work. The Goths sent soldiers to inspect the wall near the Valley of Cranes, and when they saw the place through which Eldag had sent the ass, the Goths entered the city. They set the city on fire, killing everyone in their path: old and young, infant and aged, male and female. Not a man or woman was left alive except Eldag, the Hun girl, who was released from her bondage, and the grandson of the old Count who was made a slave. . . .

All this was written on the last page of the book as a kind of epilogue by the author. And when Adiel Amzeh read the story, his eyes shed many tears. How great is the true writer, he thought, who does not abandon his work even when the sword of death hangs over his neck, who writes with his very blood what his eyes have seen!

Adiel Amzeh read many other things in the book. There were pages which supported some of his theories, and there were other pages which completely contradicted what he had previously thought. It seems he had relied too much on earlier scholars, even though he realized that much of what they wrote was confused. Adiel Amzeh remained at the hospital throughout the summer reading the book. When the days grew colder and the land was covered with frost, he had to stop working outside. He took a room at the hospital and had a heater brought in. He sat there studying the text, joining letter to letter and word to word until he could read whole passages without trouble. And if he discovered something unusual he would read the passage aloud to the patients in the great hall. "My friends and brothers," he would say, "listen while I read to you." And he would read to them about the people of the great city of Gumlidata, who had been a mighty nation, full of pride and valor, until the Gothic hordes conquered them and reduced the city to dust and ashes. He would tell them about Gomesh and Gutz and Gush and Guach, the gods of Gumlidata, and about its apostates, its great temples, its priests—each one named according to its function. And sometimes Adiel Amzeh would tell them about his new theories. He had thought out many new hypotheses and some of them he had noted on the parchment book. But his book never reached the hands of the living, for it was forbidden to remove any article or letter or book from the lepers' house. Nevertheless, in some way or other, some of his new ideas became known to his colleagues. Many times, when Adeh Eden had brought from his house the scientific journals which he received regularly, he would read his ideas in articles signed by others. He was shocked that something which he had worked on so long and hard was now published under another scholar's signature. "If this kind of thing can happen," he would ask himself, "then why do I work? I ought to be satisfied with what the others say."

Yet learning bestows a special blessing on those who are not put off so easily. Yes, Adiel Amzeh would ask himself for what and for whom he was working. But the Goddess of Wisdom herself would take hold of him and whisper: "Sit, my love, sit and do not leave me." So he would sit and discover new things which had been unknown to all the learned men of the ages until he came and revealed them. And since there were many things and learning is endless and there is much to discover and investigate and understand, he did not put his work aside and did not leave the hospital and he remained there forevermore.

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WAYLAND & ELIZABETH YOUNG

DISARMAMENT VS. ARMS CONTROL

A Discussion of Criteria

IT IS NOW generally accepted among the informed that the arms race is too dangerous for a sane power to continue pursuing without any check or inhibition whatever. The arms race is also a wasteful and deadening mode of international competition, since the fears and tensions it generates prevent the rival economies and ideologies of East and West from competing constructively. Only those who despair of the West's ability to compete constructively with Communism can still put their trust in the arms race.

Yet the long history of disarmament proposals since World War II is discouraging, and the events of the present moment are even more discouraging than usual, since the test-ban negotiations, on which such high hopes were pinned, have now failed. It is not in our view surprising that these negotiations should have failed, nor is it surprising that East and West should have reversed their positions on the matter. Two and a half years ago, the West wanted to talk about general disarmament, but the Russians persuaded us to take a test ban first, as a partial measure. Now the Russians want to talk about general disarmament, and are trying to persuade us to gather up the test-ban discussions—which they have blocked with their troika proposals—into the larger sphere, where they do not demand a veto. In judging this situation, it is only fair to the Russians to recognize that in the last two and a half years it has become quite clear from the attitude of France that a test ban in itself would not prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to more powers. And one must also allow for an increased desire on the part of Russia, since the negotiations started in 1958, to achieve some agreement that would in fact prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to China.

A very great deal has been written about disarmament policy; there is a literature and a terminology and various fairly well defined schools of thought. We hope that what follows will be comprehensible to those who are not familiar with this background, but we should perhaps make it clear at the outset that we believe there is a rough equality of sincerity and of desire to end the arms race as between the West and the East. Anybody who has followed the very full and reasoned pronouncements of the Soviet government on this matter would, indeed, be hard put to believe anything else. We have thus deliberately avoided any automatic assumption of a superior diplomatic morality in the West, and also of superior guile or determination in the East—assumptions for which in this area we cannot find very much justification.

Assuming, then, that both West and East really want to halt the arms race; that the failure of the test-ban negotiations does not foreshadow a permanent lack of seriousness about disarmament on the Russian side; and that, to succeed, a policy must be not only attractive to the West but at least ac-

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ceptable to the East as well—what is the safest and wisest policy for us in the West to pursue?

Two BROAD groups of policies are being advanced in the West as means of averting or mitigating the dangers of the arms race: the policies usually summed up under the titles "general comprehensive disarmament" and "limited arms control." They are not black and white, but shade off into one another. Nobody supposes that general disarmament under full inspection can be achieved overnight, and one might regard the stages which would be necessary to achieve it as arms control. Nor does anyone suppose that if general disarmament proved possible under a copper-bottomed system of inspection, it would not be preferable to limited measures. Such measures are therefore usually regarded as steps toward disarmament, even if that end seems indefinitely remote.

But there are degrees of emphasis in the way these two policies are advanced which make it fruitful to consider them as alternatives *insofar as they are guides to immediate* action. For convenience, we shall call the two policies "disarmament" and "arms control," but we ask the reader to bear in mind that these terms cover complex and rather amorphous bodies of ideas.

THE policy of arms control seeks to mitigate the dangers of the arms race one by one. It holds that we in the West should do all in our power to make our weapons deterrent, and not provocative or aggressive. The first step in achieving this is to turn over as soon as we can from "soft-based" missiles to "hard-based" ones. That is, we should make our missiles as invulnerable as possible so as to reduce the temptation to the other side to knock them out by a first strike. We should also increase probably the number, and certainly the dispersal, of our missiles. Further, we should seek to reassure the Communist powers, by declaration and by planting items in their intelligence services, that our weapons exist for retaliation, and not for aggression. We should point them at cities, not at missile sites, and we should proclaim that this is what we are doing. This tallies with the ancient device of taking hostages. To reduce the risk of misinterpretation of isolated events—of the odd missile being launched, or even landing on the other side and going off—we and the Communist powers might go so far as to exchange a sort of special ambassador. Such special reassurance units could also be used to inspect and control the fact that missiles on both sides were actually pointing in a retaliatory manner at cities, and not in a "pre-emptive" or aggressive manner at missile sites.

Under this stabilized system of thermonuclear strategic deterrence, smaller deterrence systems would operate. At each level —small nuclear weapons systems, conventional weapons systems, tactical air forces, naval forces, infiltration, intelligence, industrial mobilization, and recruiting policy— we should seek to convince the other side of our deterrent intentions and our retaliatory capacity. If small wars were to break out, the existence of large, larger, and largest weapons systems in a state of "stable deterrence" would tend to keep such wars small.

If this structure of stabilized deterrence were to prove durable, it might in time so reduce the temperature of international affairs that the level of arms on the two sides could begin to be reduced; but that would be a matter of wait-and-see. In the meantime, some agreement, whether tacit or explicit, to prevent the further development of the arms race should be entered into. Examples are the test ban, geographical arms embargoes, the non-militarization of space, etc.

The whole policy of arms control would make use of the capacity of human beings, and thus governments, to judge each other's intentions correctly without explicit agreement, and even without explicit communication. Those who advance this policy base their argument partly on analogies—for instance with the mathematical constructs of games theory, or with the behavior of children under discipline.

THE POLICY of disarmament, on the other hand, holds that the arms race is best stopped by a coherent plan. A general treaty would be negotiated that would bind the signatories in a declaration of intention to disarm under inspection down to national police levels, and would set up an interna-

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tional organization both to devise the steps to be taken toward this agreed goal, and to administer them as they are accepted. The signatories should then proceed, by these agreed stages, to divest themselves of their military capacity in such a way that at no stage does one side secure a more than trivial and passing military advantage, and under a system of inspection such that all the powers can be sure that what is declared is true, and that what is undertaken is done. The process should only stop when the powers have come down to the levels of internal security forces; these levels should themselves be defined after negotiation, and controlled by the international organization. Concurrently with the later phases of the procedure, a standing United Nations force should be built up. Some American advocates of this policy urge that an agreed and equal number of ICBM's should be left outstanding on each side, to act as a "transitional deterrent" until the general disarmament all around them has gone so far that both sides agree that it is safe to destroy them.

One might regard as a third policy the neutralism and unilateral nuclear disarmament which has made such headway in Britain with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (or even perhaps the total unilateral disarmament which is urged by pacifists in all countries). But this is not really a third policy; it is a form of limited arms control. One should not look at the political overtones of limited arms control and unilateral nuclear disarmament, one should not look at the people who favor these things; one should look only at the policies themselves, since what is advocated is more interesting than who advocates it.

Unilateral nuclear disarmament is a form of limited arms control in that it proposes not general disarmament, but disarmament by one country only; not comprehensive disarmament, but the abolition of one category of weapons only, nuclear weapons; in that it proposes not agreed-upon and controlled disarmament, but unconditional and uncontrolled; in that it rests on the assumption that action without agreement, and even without communication, will in itself induce other countries to take desirable actions; in that it seeks to reduce the provocativeness of our weapons systems rather than the whole complex of weapons systems themselves; in that it is advocated as something which might later lead on to general comprehensive disarmament; in that it envisages the possibility of our fighting limited wars; and in that it rests on an analogical construct not fully related to human nature as human nature may be pragmatically understood (where the arms controller thinks of mathematics or of children, the unilateral nuclear disarmer thinks of virtue and example).

This is a striking list of things that are common to the two positions, so striking as to justify the assertion that one is only a particular form of the other. We believe it is an imperfectly conceived and impractical form; but it does seem that if there is a fence in these matters, the adherents of general comprehensive disarmament are to be found on one side of it, and the "arms controllers" are to be found in company with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament on the other.

ANY POLICY which seeks to lessen the danger of the arms race must take account of certain overlapping but distinguishable problems. Six of these problems are listed below, in an order which reflects convenience in argument, not an opinion of their relative gravity.

1. *The Nth-power spread.* The more powers there are with nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, the more likely does it become that they will be used, on purpose or by mistake: as policy, in anger, in madness, or in panic. The harder also does it become to achieve disarmament or arms control.

2. *Surprise attack, including both "pre-emptive" and "catalytic" strikes.** The thousands of millions that are being spent on the "hardening" (or making invulnerable) of strategic retaliatory capacities are already the measure of our fears of surprise attack.

3. *Destabilization resulting from technological breakthrough.* As Herman Kahn has effectively argued, the nature of possible

* A "pre-emptive" strike means that *A* bombs *B* to eliminate his strategic retaliatory capacity. A "catalytic" strike means that *C* bombs *B* in order to induce him to retaliate against *A* with what weapons he has left.

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warfare, and consequently of deterrence, has been revolutionized by technological breakthrough not once since 1945, but three times. This means about once every five years. But the breakthrough cycle in men's minds, in our habits of thought, is about one generation, or thirty years. Every day we run risks which only become apparent to us long afterward, because the lead time in weapons development is five or seven years, and the lead time in conceptual development cannot be less than about thirty.

4. *Political unrest and moral deterioration arising from the development of more horrible weapons and from the still spreading knowledge of those that already exist.* This danger should be mentioned, because it is not a sort of moral vacuum that we are seeking to defend with our weapons and our policies. It is what we call in shorthand our way of life; but the shorthand conceals a highly sensitive web of political arrangement, of moral assumption, of comfortable custom, of individual perception and innovation. Pressure from the Communist system, and even more the domination of the Communist system, would destroy it. But so up to a point does the mere knowledge of the existence in the world of devices capable of destroying humanity, and so even more does the mortally flippant talk and writing of those who envisage their use with calm, and even sometimes with complacency. This problem is appreciated more keenly in countries which have experienced conventional saturation bombing than in those which have not.

5. *Accidental nuclear war.* The more weapons there are, the more likely does it become that one of them will be launched accidentally, or even go off in its owner's face accidentally. Weapons are meant to go off, and the go-off capacity must be left intact after the safety capacity has done all it can. Until that go-off capacity is eliminated—which means disarmament—accident cannot be made impossible.

6. *Escalation.* Forces with a nuclear capability have never yet faced each other in the field, and to claim to know how they would behave, or how the governments behind them would behave, is to guess. A future war begun with conventional weapons might escalate or it might not. The mere fact that it might do so is sufficient.

Let us now take this list of dangers and see whether the policy of disarmament or the policy of arms control is, in respect of each danger in turn, the more *possible,* the more *probable,* the more *plausible,* and the more *viable.* By *possible,* we mean free of internal contradictions. We say that a policy or recommended system is more or less *possible* according as the model one may construct of it in his mind is logical and self-consistent.

A policy or recommended system is more or less *probable* according as the model one may construct of it in his mind will fit in with reality, will be a true representation of real or likely situations. Does it accord with what one knows of human nature, of politicians in a crisis, of America, Russia, China, France?

By *plausible,* we mean likely to be welcome. We say that a policy is more or less plausible according as it is likely to be acceptable, given our available knowledge of them, to more or fewer of the governments and peoples on whose acceptance its functioning would depend. Is it understandable? Is it attractive?

By *viable,* we mean that a policy must not carry the seeds of its own decay and supercession; it must be self-adapting.

We can now begin the comparison.

The Nth-power Spread: To meet this danger, arms control proposes a self-denying ordinance, based on the presumed success of the test-ban negotiations. But this looks like a non-starter; France is not interested in a test ban—nor, it has now become clear, is the Soviet Union. Although it is *possible,* the policy falls down on the score of *probability.* Disarmament, in that it envisages an inspected and controlled abolition of weapons systems down to national police levels, also offers a *possible* answer to the problem of the development of independent nuclear capacities. To see how it stands the test of *probability* we must consult our present knowledge of how nations do behave. France is the case in point. Ever since de Gaulle began his independent nuclear weapons program, he has been proclaiming that he would not abandon it if a test-ban agreement were reached, but only if an agreement were reached between

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the older nuclear powers to cease the production of nuclear weapons, and to begin to abolish existing stocks. Since no other power has yet declared that it has begun a nuclear weapons program, no other power has yet declared the terms on which it would abandon such a program.

The question of China also arises. Now, it seems likely that the Russians are not only interested in disarmament because they fear American aggression, or are convinced of the illogicality of the arms race, or wish to devote their economic resources to a housing program or to Asia and Africa; if these were their only motives, they would not have turned on the heat so suddenly as they have in recent months. It seems very likely that they want disarmament now, suddenly and ardently, because China is breathing down their necks: not only demanding nuclear weapons, but also threatening, by developing her own in time, to take the decision on disarmament within the Communist camp out of Russian hands and into her own. And the fact that Russia's reaction to this is to press for immediate and general disarmament indicates that Russia (who knows China better than we do) believes this is the best way to avoid China's becoming a nuclear power. Put it the other way round: the Russians would not bother to press for disarmament if they believed that China would ignore a treaty and go ahead on her own. They would seek to keep their lead over China in another arms race of the familiar sort. We know France, and they know China. To judge by their present attitude, they believe China would behave as France has already declared she would.

What we know of France, and may deduce about China, is the best indication we have of what the attitude of other powers may be later on. In providing for the cessation of production of nuclear weapons by the great powers, and the inspected destruction of their stocks, disarmament offers a *probable* solution of the Nth-power problem.

Now is disarmament *plausible?* The countries which might be able to develop their own nuclear weapons are groaning at the prospective expense and unpopularity involved in their doing so, and they are watching each other like cats hoping that their adversaries and enemies will not do anything that would make it necessary for them to embark on a nuclear weapons project. A whole industry (because inspection would be an industry) seeking to guarantee that the need would not arise is certainly a *plausible* means of making it less likely to arise.

Is disarmament *viable* in this respect? Would it prevent an aggressive or insecure government from taking things into its own hands in a disarmed world, developing nuclear weapons secretly, and suddenly seeking advantage by threat? The policy offers two means of preventing this. The first is the operation of the proposed international judicature or control council, which would declare the treaty to have been broken, and the consequent action of the proposed international executive, which would, by military force if necessary, physically destroy the offending manufacturing capacity. But it would not be necessary to rely wholly on physical action. The second means of prevention would be the effects of a disarmed world itself on the calculations of the government concerned. To rise up alone as a treaty-breaker, as an upsetter of the status quo, would be to court great political unpopularity in a world where competition was beginning to flow in new channels, and the foreknowledge of this unpopularity would be a heavy weight in the balance against any such course of action.

Disarmament, then, offers a *possible, probable, plausible,* and on the whole *viable* answer to the Nth-power problem. Arms control offers a *possible* one, but it is not *probable* or *plausible.*

SURPRISE ATTACK, INCLUDING "PRE-EMPTIVE" STRIKE AND "CATALYTIC" STRIKE: Arms control envisages unilateral hardening of bases, possibly reinforced by the stationing of inspectors at missile sites to make sure that the missiles are not pointing at missile sites on the other side, thus suggesting preemption. A further stage would be that the inspectors, after an agreement on the abolition of missiles for warlike purposes, should check that they are not carrying warheads or satellites of military value. Disarmament, on the other hand, envisages the inspected non-manufacture of both military missiles and warheads, and the inspected destruction of existing stocks.

The relative *possibilities* of these two

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plans are rather hard to assess: both have built-in technical difficulties. Under arms control, it would be hard to be sure that you had identified all the missile sites, and were really being shown the true trajectory computations and not fakes. Under disarmament, it would be hard to be sure you had found all the reactors capable of producing weapons-grade fissile material, all the factories capable of assembling missiles, and all the existing stocks of either. While no one means of inspection can give very good security, a planned combination of all possible means, scanning right across the field, could give a very much higher degree, and one which, with experience, could well become acceptable. Equally, no combination of means can now, or probably ever, give total security.

But we have always been satisfied with less than a hundred per cent security in our defense arrangements. Earlier in our history, we accepted imperfect security against defeat, and we were sometimes defeated. Recently we have been accepting imperfect security against total obliteration, though we have not yet been obliterated. There is no reason why we should demand a much higher degree of security in defense by inspected disarmament than we do in defense by weapons. Any higher degree would be an advantage. It is the unacceptable degree of security offered by modern weapons which has promoted the whole search for arms control policies. What degree of security *is* obtainable by inspection can only be found out by very much more research than is yet being done, as pioneers in the field such as Jerome B. Wiesner, Donald Brennan, Bernard Feld, and Jay Orear do not fail to point out.

THUS, both policies have difficulties as to their *possibility*, where surprise attack is concerned, but it seems clear that disarmament offers a much more *probable* solution than arms control. To begin with, arms control relies on hardening of bases, before or during the setting up of limited inspection. But the hardening of bases—whether by mobility, by physical means such as burying, or by secrecy (Polaris)—cannot remove the other side's fear of surprise attack. When we speak of "first strike weapons," we mean weapons which can be used *only* for a first strike and cannot, because of their vulnerability, be used for a second strike. But when we speak of second strike weapons, we do not mean weapons which cannot be used for a first strike, we mean weapons which can be used for a second strike *as well as* for a first strike. We should speak more truly if we called an invulnerable weapons system a "first-or-second strike" system. It is an exaggeration to say that softness equals provocation, and hardness equals deterrence; it is true to say only that hardness gives somewhat less provocation and somewhat more deterrence than softness. It may be that part of the present precipitate American drive toward an invulnerable retaliatory capacity against rationally launched surprise attack springs from America's particular experience at Pearl Harbor. ("Deterrence" only works against a rational enemy; no irrational attack can be deterred—that is, no attack motivated by despair, madness, panic, or bad intelligence.)

Under a policy of limited arms control, inspectors would be either stationed for an indefinite time at missile sites, or irregularly invited, and entitled to inspect the alignment of the missiles, and possibly their top ends. But they would not be entitled to inspect their bottom ends, since that is where the fuel is, and fuel might be a legitimate secret. Equally, inspectors might be entitled to examine the procedures and products of nuclear installations to see if they were manufacturing weapons-grade fissile material, but be prohibited from inquiring into whether they were making the material for radiological weapons, which might be a legitimate secret. The political friction inherent in such arrangements makes the policy highly *improbable*.

Under disarmament, on the other hand, the whole economy and society of a country would be opened to the inspectorate in ever wider and wider circles as part of an agreed process toward the day when everything is open and nothing found. Political frictions would arise, but they would be more tolerable since it would be generally known that they were transient; they could be accepted as the temporary price for the achievement of a manifestly desirable end. Under arms control, there is no end in sight, and what causes friction today is

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likely to cause a total breakdown tomorrow. It is technically easier to determine the existence or non-existence of any arms industry at all than to distinguish an illegitimate part of a permitted arms industry, and it is politically very much easier. This gives disarmament a clear advantage on the score of *probability* in respect to the danger of surprise attack.

In considering *plausibility*, the first thing that must strike us is the presence in arms control of a strong element of reliance on tacit communication, and its absence in disarmament. The first communication which must be made if one is attempting to set up a balance resting on tacit communication, is a question, namely: "Will you agree to set up a balance by tacit communication?" Now, whether or not this question has been tacitly asked of the Russians, it has certainly been explicitly asked, and it has been most explicitly answered, the answer being No. Unless there is some reason to suppose that this explicit No means a tacit Yes, one must conclude that the proposal is *implausible*.

Some adherents of arms control hold that as soon as the Russians understand the policy, they cannot but accept it, and that it is our duty in the West to keep on helping them to understand it until that day. This argument could be applied to Christianity as well as to arms control, or to multi-party democracy or to capitalism. There are many things we believe and accept and wish they would too. But when they do not, we no longer think it will suffice to go on spelling out the facts to them, to raise our voices when the foreigner can't understand us. The whole situation arises because the Russians think differently from us, and if the authors of one particular brand of Western arms control policy believe that by repetition and elucidation they can sell it to a society which has long since rejected our religion, our politics, and our economics, they are salesmen indeed.

THE *plausibility* of general disarmament as a whole may be conveniently discussed here, under the heading of surprise attack.

Limited arms control is one of the alternatives open to the Western governments, and it has been decisively rejected by the East. General disarmament, which is the other alternative open to the West, has been decisively acclaimed and advocated by the East. Since an acceptable degree of security is no longer within our own grasp, and since the two policies are, as regards their immediate application, alternatives, we must regard disarmament as the more *plausible*. But the fact that the Russians have themselves so ardently embraced it creates a fear that, simply because they have embraced it, it must be to our disadvantage. It should not be necessary to dwell on the fact that general and comprehensive disarmament subject to full inspection is not specifically or originally a Russian idea; that it would not matter if it were; that it has been the declared final aim of all governments for years; that it has been agreed upon as the first common aim in world policy ever to be adopted by the British Commonwealth; and that, if two hostile systems are seeking agreement, it is not the wholehearted adoption of this or that proposal by one side which may make agreement impossible, but on the contrary, the willingness of the other to fall into the trap of regarding wholehearted adoption as evidence in itself of a trap.

This particular difficulty is more fruitfully considered if one regards comprehensive and general disarmament as the price the Russians ask for inspection, and inspection as the price the Americans ask for disarmament. The USSR has an objection, arising from its experience, to inspection without guaranteed disarmament. The U.S. has an objection, arising from its experience, to disarmament without guaranteed inspection. Fitted together like this, the two attitudes suggest a highly *plausible* course of action in which the differences are merely a matter of haggling.

There is another difficulty or implausibility to be faced, the transitional deterrent. This often forms part of general disarmament proposals in the U.S., and of course it is nothing compared with the continued existence of ICBM forces of unlimited size, or of a size limited only by tacit agreement, which are part of the arms control approach. (Indeed it has been argued that the best level of ICBM balance for arms control would be a good deal higher than what either side has now.)

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The transitional deterrent was presented to the Russians as part of a disarmament scheme at the recent International Conference of Scientists in Moscow. They did not like it at all. It may be that if general disarmament is adopted as Western policy, the transitional deterrent will prove to be the greatest obstacle to agreement. Since the Moscow conference, it has been roundly attacked in the Soviet press by some of the men concerned with the technicalities of disarmament. They call it "concealing a weapon behind your back," and they regard it as vitiating the whole policy to a point where it becomes almost as bad as limited arms control. Now why is this? Is it simply because they fear the transitional deterrent may not prove transitional enough, that it may prove so permanent that they will not be able to induce China to accept the equality of general comprehensive disarmament? Such may be the case, but their opposition to the transitional deterrent may equally be a reflection of the uncertainty in the presentation of the American case about the *number* of ICBM's which are to be transitionally left outstanding. If the proposed number were pitched well below the lowest credible estimate of the number of ICBM's which the Russians now have operational, their objection might weaken. It is no good saying to them: "Let us transitionally stabilize at three hundred ICBM's," if they only have thirty this year, or whatever the figure may be. They want disarmament before the Chinese dominate the situation. However, the more this matter can be classified as an inspection problem, and the less as a carry-over of deterrent strategy, the more easily is it likely to be sorted out.

AND NOW FOR *viability*. The solutions of arms control to the problem of surprise attack are not *viable* in so far as they rest on tacit communication; not *viable* because not *plausible*. Insofar as they rest on partial measures of inspection they are not *viable* because not *probable;* the improbability being inherent in the political friction that would arise from such measures, and from the Russians' inevitable and often proclaimed suspicion of anything which they can dub "licensed espionage." Disarmament, on the other hand, offers a *viable* solution because the incentives not to re-arm, not to start mankind back up the arms race again, would be the same as in the case of the Nth powers; that is, world opinion and a UN force.

But these incentives might prove inadequate. In a disarmed world, either side could choose to re-arm, calculating that its advantage lay that way, or in a mistaken belief that the other side was already re-arming. If it did, the other side would race to re-arm faster, and we should be back where we are now. But it would take either side perhaps a couple of years to build up a nuclear striking force from scratch, or indeed any sizable force, using only that knowledge which is ineradicable from memory and from paper. The point is that you can do a lot more reconsidering and consulting and temper-keeping and negotiating in two years than you can in ten minutes, or whatever the present warning time is. Comprehensive disarmament offers time to think again; stable deterrence does not. The whole logic of disarmament is that it removes the threat of thermonuclear war from ten minutes to, say, two years. More than that a policy cannot do.

DESTABILIZATION ARISING FROM TECHNOLOGICAL BREAKTHROUGH: Arms control offers as a solution to this problem a tacit agreement that it will not be in anybody's interest to seek breakthroughs. Disarmament offers a controlled absence of weapons, which *a fortiori* involves an absence of developments in weapons. Both are *possible*. But a tacit agreement to avoid weapons improvement is not *probable*. Like so much else in the policy, it rests on mutual trust. And if we can trust our adversaries to see advantage in the same direction that we do—namely, in not developing bigger and worse weapons—we can trust them to live at peace in a disarmed world. It takes no more trust to do the latter than the former, possibly less.

Disarmament, on the other hand, provides an answer that is *possible, probable, plausible,* and rather *viable*. The only reservation is under the head of viability; technological breakthroughs can occur in the potentiality of the drawing-board as well as in the actuality of weapons systems themselves. If this happened in a disarmed world, as it no doubt would, one would have

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to reckon on an increase in the horror of the war which could result after re-armament, and possibly on a reduction of the time necessary to re-arm. But this result would surely act as a restraint on the will to re-arm, not as an incentive to it. The re-established openness of science would combine with the effects of inspection to insure that the battle of the drawing-boards stayed on the drawing-boards.

POLITICAL UNREST AND MORAL DETERIORATION ARISING FROM THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORE HORRIBLE WEAPONS AND GROWING KNOWLEDGE OF PRESENT ONES: When you get a technological breakthrough whose results are actually visible, you cannot avoid the political consequences. But when you get a technological breakthrough in the potentiality of the drawing-board, it will have very little political consequence; it will remain science fiction to the man in the street. Disarmament has the edge here in providing a *probable, plausible,* and *viable* solution. As regards existing weapons, arms control has nothing to offer, since it does not provide for the abolition of any weapons systems. At present the overt political unrest caused by the arms race is confined mainly to Britain, with rumblings in Germany and Japan. But as existing weapons spread around the world and as the peoples come more fully to understand what they mean, it seems inevitable that there will be unrest wherever there is free political expression, and it is not everywhere likely to be as peaceably expressed as it has been in Britain. In proposing the permanent abolition of the things which cause unrest, disarmament provides an answer to this problem which meets all four of our requirements.

The moral question is a more shadowy one. One may or may not believe that the difficulty of explaining to children why they are under instant threat of incineration at every moment of every day makes it difficult to explain anything else to them, as for instance that they should not kill, steal, or loaf. But in any case moral subversion goes with, and can be removed with, political unrest.

ACCIDENTAL WAR: Here arms control has a rather well-developed and individual solution; it is the "special reassurance force." This would be a kind of special envoy who, if a missile were accidentally launched from the country where he was posted, and even if it landed on the other side and went off, would telephone at once to his principal at home and pass on to him the explanations and apologies he would have received from the government of the country where he was posted. It amounts in fact to giving the American Embassy in Moscow a tied line to the White House, and vice versa. This is *possible.* It is even *probable,* in the sense that such a partial system, without general disarmament, would not conflict with what any power would regard as its vital interest or security. But it is not very *plausible,* in that the man in the street would not think very much had been achieved. He would think: "Thank you for your efforts to make the world safer, but I thought embassies were supposed to do that kind of thing anyhow." On the other hand, the solution is *viable.* If it works to begin with, it would probably go on working, even though repeated explanations and apologies might begin to pall.

Disarmament, on the other hand, is good all along the line. If a system gives a risk of accident, the abolition of the system is a *possible, probable, plausible,* and *viable* means of abolishing the risk.

ESCALATION: Arms control offers as a solution here an exact balance of forces, or a balance as exact as can be obtained, at all levels. If war breaks out on a small scale and with small weapons under conditions of equality, the existence of larger weapons in a similar equality will make it to nobody's interest to allow the war to get larger. This is a *possible* solution; it is a good model in itself. But is it *probable?* Does the model accord with reality? Nobody would go to war if he were perfectly convinced of the existence of a balance at all levels; such a war would by definition be a stalemate. It is, of course, theoretically possible to achieve such an up-and-down balance. But even if it did exist, it is most improbable that everybody would always believe it to exist. A mistaken assessment of the degree of balance could lead to warlike initiative just as well as a lack of balance itself. What is *improbable* cannot long seem *plausible*; the policy is thus not *viable.* The longer a balance or a conviction

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of balance endured, the more unreasonable would it seem to continue locked in such an expensive and prohibitive clinch. Governments would arrive in time at the view that it would be equally effective, as well as much safer and much cheaper, to remove the balance into the potentiality of the drawing-board. The program would be bound to tail off into general disarmament. It is simply a very long and risky way round.

The solution offered by disarmament to the escalation problem is certainly a *possible* one. Under the heading of *probability*, though, it involves a danger which must be taken very seriously; the danger of engendering, on the way down to disarmament, an imbalance marked enough to give rise to a temptation to secure political advantage by attack or threat of attack. Now what degree of imbalance will produce such a temptation? It is often assumed that any degree of imbalance whatever will do so. To determine whether this is so, we should consult precedent. Is the peace kept at present, for instance, by a very accurate balance? In fact it is not. Estimates differ, but it seems probable that the U.S. and her allies could deliver more megatons on the soil of metropolitan Russia than could Russia on the soil of the metropolitan U.S., and this is an imbalance, a material imbalance, quite irrespective of first- or second-strike posture. It is certain that Russia and her allies have more troops and a greater conventional armament in Europe than America and her allies have, and this too is an imbalance. The two imbalances cut different ways, and it would perhaps be arguable that there is a balance of imbalances. But ten years ago, between, say, 1945 and 1955, the American superiority in strategic striking power was surely such that any Russian superiority in conventional capacity, imbalance for imbalance, was outweighed. And yet the peace was broadly kept.

Conversely, one may indeed suppose that if either side had chosen in the last fifteen years to remain completely without military capacity in the face of the military capacity of the other, the armed side would have taken advantage of the situation. It is a question of deciding where along the line from a military balance of one to one, to a military imbalance of infinity, the danger point comes. Since it is not possible to determine this point, we must err on the side of safety.

A TREATY may be well drawn for safety, as far as the undertakings in it are concerned, and may yet be broken. Arms control, for all that it rests in the main on the idea of tacit communication between the two sides and on a common understanding of common dangers, is seldom advanced without the recommendation of some areas of mutual inspection. As we have seen, it goes with a test-ban inspectorate, an inspection of big rocket sites, and there is the suggestion of a special reassurance force, which amounts to the inspection of motives. In other words, the policy recognizes that some things are too important to be left to tacit communication and common understanding; they must be inspected.

Disarmament, on the other hand, holds that everything is too important to be left to tacit communication and that everything must be open to inspection. Not only is total inspection safer than partial inspection; it is also politically easier because it does not give rise to the friction at the edges that partial inspection does. There are no edges. It is thus more *probable*. Moreover, what the Russians object to, what probably any nation would object to when it came to consider it (and the present writers do not hold the common view that the Russians have done less homework on all this than we in the West; they have simply done a different sort of homework), is not the inspection of disarmament, of the destruction of arms and the continued non-existence of arms, but the inspection of arms in existence. One would not object to a civilian installation being open to inspection except on commercial grounds, when the objection would probably be surmountable. One would not object to the inspection of the destruction of a declared weapon. One might not object to inspectors searching for undeclared weapons. One might even not object to an inspector standing beside a declared weapon that was due for destruction in a year's time. But one would certainly object to a situation where every weapon, irrespective of whether it was earmarked for destruction or not, had an inspector standing permanently beside it. This would be a weapon in being, part of a force in being, which exists because it might have

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to be used. An inspector would deprive it of some of its utility, and to suggest the presence of such an inspector is to suggest that one's adversary give breakfast to a spy. Once again, the arms control proposal leads, by its extreme *implausibility* and lack of *viability,* straight into general disarmament, which says one should destroy the useless weapon.

The *viability* of general disarmament with respect to the danger of escalation is good but not infinite. It simply adds one more rung at the bottom of the ladder itself. In an armed world, the rungs, reading downward, are perhaps thermonuclear war, nuclear war, small nuclear war, conventional war, brushfire, police *putsch,* armed peace. The rung that disarmament adds at the bottom is disarmed peace. There would be just one more fence, and that a tall one, to cross on the way up to destruction of civilization. That is good, and adds *viability.*

OUR FOURFOLD GRID—*possibility, probability, plausibility,* and *viability*—has perhaps been cumbersome, and is certainly only one of many possible ways in which the two policies can be compared. Moreover, a comparison between the two policies is only one of many possible ways in which this problem can usefully be considered. But for what it is worth, the result of this comparison is clearly that general comprehensive disarmament is to be preferred to limited measures of arms control as a policy aim. It is not markedly more *possible,* but it is considerably more *probable,* considerably more *plausible,* and overwhelmingly more *viable.* Its sole *implausibility* is its extreme boldness, which is alarming to some. One may be tempted to prefer arms control because it seems cautious, pragmatic, wait-and-see; it appears to burn no boats. But in hard fact, disarmament burns no boats either, since one may always declare the agreements void and re-arm. Nothing is lost, if the inspection is effective. Caution itself suggests that we had better rely on open inspection than on the tacit communication, common understanding, and good intelligence which are so necessary to arms control, and so lacking in the present world situation.

The danger to civilization in general is such that all agree we must avert it either by easing up on our present courses, or by reversing them outright. But disarmament prospects, like many other things in the thermonuclear age, invert the usual rules of politics. Speed is now *safer* than delay; boldness of intention is now safer than caution of intention. But caution of execution remains as necessary as ever, and is now more possible than ever before, because of the development of the modern sampling and communications techniques on which inspection would rely.

It is not wise to go on playing "chicken" with thermonuclear—or neutron bomb—war. A policy which avoids that situation and at the same time allows the West to compete in a less suicidal manner with Communism, is a good policy. That it would also prise open the clam of Russian secrecy and suspicion instead of being sucked in and destroyed by it (as would be the fate of limited measures) makes comprehensive disarmament, fully controlled and fully inspected, a policy the West should adopt wholeheartedly.

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MORDECAI RICHLER

THEIR CANADA AND MINE

A Memoir

BACK in 1953, on the first Sunday after my return to Montreal from a two-year stay in Europe, I went to my grandmother's house.

"How is it for the Jews in Europe?" she asked me.

My uncles reproached me for not having been to Israel, but their questions about Europe were less poignant than my grandmother's. Had I seen the Folies Bergères? The changing of the Guard? My uncles were on their way to becoming Canadians.

Canada, from the beginning, was second best. It made us nearly Americans.

My grandfather, like so many others, came to Canada by steerage from Poland in 1900 and settled down not far from Main Street in what was to become a ghetto. Here, as in the real America, the immigrants worked under appalling conditions in factories. They rented halls over poolrooms and grocery stores to meet and form burial societies and create *shuls*. They sent to the old country for relatives left behind and rabbis and brides. Slowly, unfalteringly, the immigrants started to struggle up a ladder of streets, from one where you had to leave your garbage outside your front door to another where you actually had a rear lane; from the three rooms over the grocery or tailor shop to your own cold-water flat on a street with trees.

Our street, St. Urbain, was one of five working-class ghetto streets between the Main and Park Avenue.

To a middle-class stranger, it's true, any one of these streets would have seemed as squalid as the next. On each corner a cigar store, a grocery, and a fruit man. Outside staircases everywhere. Winding ones, wooden ones, rusty and risky ones. An endless repetition of precious peeling balconies and waste lots making the occasional gap here and there. But, as we boys knew, each street between the Main and Park Avenue represented subtle differences in income. No two cold-water flats were alike and no two stores were the same either. Best Fruit gypped on weight but Smiley's didn't give credit.

Among the wonders of St. Urbain, our St. Urbain, there was a man who ran for alderman each election on a one-plank platform (provincial speed cops were anti-Semites), a boy nobody remembered who had gone on to become a professor at MIT, two men who had served with the MacKenzie-Paps in the Spanish Civil War (they no longer spoke to each other), Herscovitch's cousin Larry, who had demanded kosher food when he was sentenced to six months in jail for receiving stolen goods, a woman who called herself a divorcee, and a boxer who had made the ratings in *Ring* magazine.

MORDECAI RICHLER has published four novels, the latest one being *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*. Born in Montreal in 1931, Mr. Richler recently returned to Canada after an absence of seven years. This is his first appearance in COMMENTARY.

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St. Urbain was, I suppose, somewhat similar to ghetto streets in New York and Chicago. There were some crucial differences, however. We were Canadians, therefore we had a King. We also had "pea-soups," i.e., French Canadians, in the neighborhood.

While the King never actually stopped on St. Urbain, he did pass a few streets above on his visit to Canada just before the war, and many of us turned out to wave. Our attitude toward the Royal Family was characterized by an amused benevolence. They didn't affect the price of potatoes. Neither could they help or hinder the establishment of the State of Israel. Like Churchill, for instance. The King, we were told, was just a figurehead. "If he wants to put in even double windows at the palace, he needs a special act of Parliament." We could afford to be patronizing because among our own kings we could count Solomon and David. True, we wished the Royal Family a long life every morning in *shul,* but this wasn't servility. It was generosity.

"Pea-soups" were for turning the lights on and off on Shabbos and running elevators and cleaning out chimneys and furnaces. They were, it was rumored, ridden with TB, rickets, and diseases it's better not to mention. You gave them old clothes. A week before the High Holidays you had one in to wax the floors. The French Canadians were our *"schwartze."*

Our world was made up of five streets. Above Park Avenue came Outremont, where Jewish bosses and professional men were already beginning to make inroads on what used to be a middle-class French Canadian reserve. Two streets below our own came the Main.

The Main was rich in delights. But looking at it again after an absence of many years I must say that it can also be sordid, it's filthy, and hollering with stores whose wares, whether furniture or fruit, are ugly or damaged. The signs still say FANTASTIC DISCOUNTS or FORCED TO SELL PRICES HERE, but the bargains so bitterly sought after are illusory—and perhaps they always were.

The Main was the sort of street narrow reform candidates were always clamoring about. It was described as vice-ridden, a hot-bed for Communism, and a breeding ground for juvenile delinquency. Well, I guess there was a patina of truth on all these clichés. But they overlooked a lot. Like the smell of fresh bagels on a Sunday morning and the pike floating glumly toward you in the window of YOUR MOST TRUSTFUL kosher butcher. The "war assets" store with the sign over the cash that read MEXICAN MONEY IS ACCEPTED IN MEXICO. And more, much more. Why, within one block you could have disfiguring blackheads removed, talk with a miracle-working rabbi, shoot a game of snooker with a stranger, bet on a horse, consult a matchmaker, read newspapers in six different languages, furnish your bedroom for twenty dollars down, send a food parcel to a relative in Warsaw, and drop in on a herbalist with a sure cure for the most embarrassing of all ailments.

The Main, with something for all our appetites, was dedicated to pinching pennies from the poor, but it was there to entertain, educate, and comfort us too. Across the street from the *shul* you could see THE PICTURE THEY CLAIMED COULD NEVER BE MADE. A little farther down the street there was the Workman's Circle and, if you liked, a strip-tease show. It was to the Main, once a year before the High Holidays, that I was taken along for a new suit (the itch of the cheap tweed was excruciating) and shoes (always with a squeak). We also shopped for food on the Main, and here the important thing was to watch the man at the scales. On the Main, too, was the Chinese laundry—"Have you ever seen such hard workers?"—the Italian hat-blocker—"Tony's a good *goy,* you know. Against Mussolini from the very first."—and strolling French Canadian priests—"Some

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of them even speak Hebrew now. Well, if you ask me it's none of their business. Enough's enough, you know." Kids like myself were dragged along on shopping expeditions to carry parcels. Old men gave us snuff, at the delicatessen we were allowed salami butts, card players bought us candy for luck, and everywhere we were poked and pinched by the mothers. The best that could be said of us was, "He eats well, knock wood," and later, as we went off to school, "He's a rank-one boy."

After the shopping, once our errands had been done, we returned to the Main once more, either for part-time jobs or to study with our *melamed*. Jobs going on the Main included spotting pins in a bowling alley, collecting butcher bills and, best of all, working at a newsstand, where you could read the *Police Gazette* free and pick up a little extra short-changing strangers during the rush hour. But make no mistake. We were not sent out to work because we were poor, God forbid, like those no-goods next door. Work was good for our character development and the fact that we were paid was incidental. To qualify for a job we were supposed to be "bright, ambitious, and willing to learn." An ad I once saw in a shoe store window read: PART TIME BOY WANTED FOR EXPANDING BUSINESS—EXPERIENCE ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY—BUT NOT ESSENTIAL.

Our jobs and lessons finished, we would wander the streets in small groups, smoking Turret cigarettes and telling bad jokes.

"Hey, shmo-hawk, what's the difference between a mail box and an elephant's ass?"

"I dunno."

"Well, I wouldn't send *you* to mail my letters."

As the French Canadian factory girls passed arm-in-arm we would shout things like, "I've got the time if you've got the place."

Shabbos it was back to the Main again and the original Young Israel Synagogue. While our grandfathers and fathers prayed and gossiped and speculated about the war in Europe in the musty room below, we played chin-the-bar upstairs and told jokes that began, "Confucius say . . ." or "Once there was an Englishman, Irishman, and a Hebe, see. And they were all after this here dame. . . ." We would return to the Main once more when we wanted a fight with the pea-soups. Winter, as I remember it, was best for this type of sport. We could throw snowballs packed with ice or frozen horse-buns and, with darkness coming so early, it was easier to elude pursuers. Soon, however, we developed a technique of battle that served us well even in the spring. Three of us would hide under an outside staircase while the fourth member of our group, a kid named Eddy, would stand idly on the sidewalk. Eddy was a good head-and-a-half shorter than the rest of us. (For this, it was rumored, his mother was to blame. She wouldn't let Eddy have his tonsils removed and that's why he was such a runt. It was not that Eddy's mother feared surgery but Eddy sang in the choir of a rich *shul*, this brought in some thirty dollars a month, and if his tonsils were removed, it was feared his voice would go too. Eddy sang sweetly.) Anyway, he would stand out there alone, and when the first solitary pea-soup passed he'd kick him in the shins. The pea-soup, looking down on little Eddy, would naturally knock him one on the head. Then, and only then, would we emerge from under the staircase. "Hey," one of us would say, "that's my kid brother you just slugged," and before the poor pea-soup could protest we were all over him.

These and other fights, however, sprang more out of boredom than from true racial hatred, not that there were no racial problems on the Main.

FOR if the Main was a poor man's street, it was also a dividing line. Below, the French Canadians. Above, some distance above, the English. On the Main itself

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there were some Italians, Poles, Yugoslavs, and Ukrainians, but they did not count as true Gentiles. Even the French Canadians, who were our enemies, were not entirely unloved. Like us, they were poor and rough with large families and spoke English badly.

Looking back it seems that it was only the English who were truly hated and feared. "Among them," I heard it said, "with those porridge-faces, who can tell what they're thinking. *If* they do think." It was, we felt, their country, and given enough liquor who knew when they'd make trouble?

We were a rude, aggressive bunch round the Main. Cocky too. Send round Einstein and we would not have been overawed. But bring round the most insignificant little Anglo-Saxon fire insurance inspector and even the most powerful merchant on the street would dip into the drawer for a fiver or a bottle and begin to bow and scrape and say "Sir."

After school we used to race down to the Main to play pool at the Rachel or the Mount Royal. Other days, when we chose to avoid school altogether, we used to take the No. 55 streetcar as far as St. Catherine Street, where there was a variety of amusements offered. We could play the pinball machines and watch archaic strip-tease movies for a nickel at the Silver Gameland. At the Midway or the Crystal Palace we could usually see a double feature and a girlie show for as little as thirty-five cents. The Main, at this juncture, was thick with drifters, panhandlers, and whores. Available on both sides of the street were "Tourist Rooms" by day and night, and everywhere there was the smell of French fried potatoes cooking in stale oil. Tough, unshaven men in checked shirts stood in knots outside the taverns and cheap cafés. There was the threat of violence.

As I recall it, we were always being warned about the Main. Our grandparents and parents had come there by steerage from Rumania or cattleboat from Poland by way of Liverpool. But no sooner had they unpacked their bundles and cardboard suitcases than they were planning a better, brighter life for us, the Canadian-born children. The Main, good enough for them, was not to be for us, and that, they told us again and again, was what the struggle was for. The Main was for *bummers,* drinkers, and (heaven forbid) failures.

The Main, incidentally, was also for poets. A. M. Klein has written tenderly of the street in *Hath Not a Jew,* a collection of poems, and in his one novel, *The Second Scroll* (Knopf, 1951). More recently, Irving Layton, writing in a tougher, more colloquial style, has reached a surprisingly large Canadian audience with his collection of poems, *Red Carpet for the Sun* (McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 1959). There have also been Ted Allen's short stories, published in the *New Yorker* and elsewhere in the 40's (and his play, *The Secret of the World,* soon to be produced in London). The city's leading Yiddish poet, Yakov Yitzhok Segal, died in 1955, but others, such as Melech Ravitch, still write lively pieces for the Yiddish journals. All their published works, as well as manuscripts, reviews, mentions, scraps, just about anything, are lovingly cared for by David Rome at the Jewish Public Library.

DURING the years leading up to the war, the ideal of our ghetto, no different from any other in America in this respect, was the doctor. This, mistakenly, was taken to be the very apogee of learning and refinement. In those days there also began the familiar process of alienation between immigrant parents and Canadian-born children. Our older brothers and cousins, off to the university, came home to realize for the first time that our parents spoke with embarrassing accents. Even the younger boys, like myself, were going to "their" schools. According to them, the priests had made a tremendous contribution to the exploration and de-

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velopment of this country. Some were heroes. But our parents had other memories, different ideas, about the priesthood. At school we were taught about the glory of the Crusades and at home we were told of the bloodier side to that story. Though we wished Lord Tweedsmuir, the Governor-General, a long life each Saturday morning in *shul*, there were those among us who also knew him as John Buchan, the author of thrillers riddled with anti-Semitism. From the very beginning there was their history, and ours. Our heroes, and theirs.

OUR school, Baron Byng High School, was under the jurisdiction of the Protestant School Board, but had a student body that was nevertheless almost 100 per cent Jewish. It became something of a legend in our area. Again and again we led the Province in the junior matriculation (McGill entrance exams). This was galling to those on the left who held we were the same as everyone else, but to the many more who felt that at all times there's nothing like a Yiddish boy, it was an annual cause for celebration. Our class at BBHS, Room 41, was one of the few to boast a true Gentile, i.e., a white Protestant. His name was Whelan—and he certainly was a curiosity. Envious students came from other classes to study and question him. Whelan was not too bright, but he gave Room 41 a certain tone, and in order to keep him with us we wrote essays for him and slipped him answers at examination time. We were, I'd say, as proud of Whelan's accomplishments (and no less condescending) as ever a Britisher abroad was of his African houseboy.

Our parents used to apply a special standard to all men and events. "Is it good for the Jews?" By this test they interpreted the policies of MacKenzie King and the Stanley Cup play-offs (our equivalent of the World Series) and earthquakes in Japan. To take one example—if the Montreal Canadiens won the Stanley Cup it would infuriate the English in Toronto, and as long as the English and French were going at each other they left us alone: *ergo*, it was good for the Jews if the Canadiens won the Stanley Cup.

We were convinced that we gained from dissension between Canada's two cultures, the English and the French, and we looked neither to England nor France for guidance. We turned to the United States. The real America.

America was Roosevelt, the Yeshiva College, Danny Kaye, a Jew in the Supreme Court, the *Jewish Daily Forward*, Max Baer, Mickey Katz records, Dubinsky, Mrs. Nussbaum of Allen's Alley, and Gregory Peck looking so cute in *Gentleman's Agreement*. Why, in the United States a Jew even wrote speeches for the President. Returning cousins swore they had heard a cop speak Yiddish in Brooklyn. There were the Catskill hotels, Jewish soap operas on the radio, and, above all earthly pleasure grounds, Florida. Miami. No manufacturer had quite made it in Montreal until he was able to spend a month each winter in Miami.

We were governed by Ottawa, we were also British subjects, but our true capital was certainly New York. Success was (and still is) acceptance by the United States. For a fighter this meant a main bout at Madison Square Garden, for a writer or an artist, praise from New York critics (Adele Wiseman for her novel, *The Sacrifice*), for a businessman, a Miami tan, and, today, for comics, an appearance on the Ed Sullivan show (Wayne and Shuster), or for actors, not an important part at the Stratford Festival but Broadway (William Shatner, Lou Jacobi) or the lead in a Hollywood TV series (Lorne Green in *Bonanza*). The outside world, "their" Canada, only concerned us insofar as it affected our living conditions. All the same, we liked to impress the *goyim*. A knock on the knuckles from time to time wouldn't hurt them. So, while we secretly believed that the baseball field or the prize ring was no place for a Jewish boy, we took enormous pleasure in the accomplishments

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of, say, Kermit Kitman, a one-time outfielder with the Montreal Royals, and Maxie Berger, the boxer.

Streets like our St. Urbain and Outremont, where the rich lived, made up an almost self-contained world. Outside of business there was minimal contact with the Gentiles. This was hardly petulant clannishness or naive fear. In the years leading up to the war neo-fascist groups were extremely active in Canada. You had Father Coughlin, Lindberg, and others. We had Adrian Arcand. The upshot was almost the same. So I can recall seeing swastikas and "*A bas les Juifs*" painted on the Laurentian highway. There were suburban areas and hotels in the mountains where we were not allowed, beaches with signs that read GENTILES ONLY, quotas at the universities, and serious racial fights on Park Avenue. The democracy we were being invited to defend was imperfect and hostile to us. Without question it was better for us here than in Europe, but this was still their Canada, not ours.

I WAS only a boy during the war. I can remember signs in cigar stores that warned us THE WALLS HAVE EARS and THE ENEMY IS EVERYWHERE. I can also remember my parents, my uncles and aunts, cracking peanuts on a Friday night and waiting for the United States, for those two unequaled friends of our people, Roosevelt and Winchell, to come off it and get into the war. We admired the British, they were gutsy, but we had much more confidence in the United States Marines. (Educated by Hollywood, we could see the likes of John Wayne, Gable, and Robert Taylor, making mincemeat of the Panzers, while Noel Coward, Laurence Olivier, and others seen here in a spate of British war films, looked all too humanly vulnerable to us.) Briefly, then, Pearl Harbor was a day of jubilation here, but the war itself made for some confusions. In another country, relatives recalled by my grandparents were being murdered. But out on the streets in our air cadet uniforms, we Baron Byng boys were more interested in seeking out the fabulously wicked V-girls ("They all go the limit with guys in uniform, see. It's patriotic like.") we had read about in the *Herald*. True, we made some sacrifices. American comic books were banned for the duration due, I think, to a shortage of U. S. funds. So we had to put up a quarter on the black market for copies of the *Batman* and *Tip-Top Comics*. But at the same corner newsstand we bought a page on which four pigs had been printed. When we folded the paper together as directed the four pig's behinds made up Hitler's hateful face. Outside Cooperman's Superior Provisions, where if you were a regular you could get sugar without ration coupons, we would chant "Black-Market Cooperman! Black-Market Cooperman!" until the old man came out, waving his broom, and chased us down the street.

The war in Europe brought about considerable changes within the Jewish community in Montreal. To begin with, there was the coming of the refugees. These men, interned in England as enemy aliens and sent to Canada where they were eventually released, were to make a tremendous impact on the community. I think we had conjured up a picture of the refugees as penurious Hasidim with packs on their backs. We were eager to be helpful, our gestures were large, but in return we expected a little gratitude. As it turned out, the refugees, mostly German and Austrian Jews, were far more sophisticated and better educated than we were. They had not, like our immigrant grandparents, come from little villages in Galicia. Neither did they despise Europe. To the contrary, they found our culture thin, the city provincial, and the Jews narrow. This bewildered and stung us. But what cut deepest, I suppose, was that the refugees spoke English better than we did and, among themselves, had the gall to talk in the hated German language. Many of them also made it clear that Canada was no more than a frozen

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place to stop until a U. S. visa was forthcoming. So, for a while, we real Canadians were hostile. (This has long since died down, of course, and the refugees of 1940–41 have been assimilated into the community. They have done much to enrich its cultural life, too.)

For our grandparents who remembered those left behind in Rumania and Poland the war was a time of unspeakable grief. Parents watched their sons grow up too quickly and stood by helplessly as the boys went off to the fighting one by one. (They didn't have to go, either, for until the very last days of the war Canadians could only be drafted for service *within* Canada. A boy had to volunteer before he could be sent overseas.) But for those of my own age the war was something else. I cannot remember it as a black time, and I think it must be so for most boys of my generation. For the awful truth is that for many of us to look back on the war is to recall the first time our fathers earned a good living. Even as the bombs fell and the ships went down, always elsewhere, our country was busting out of the depression into a period of hitherto unknown prosperity. For my generation the war was to hear of death and sacrifice but to see with our own eyes the departure from cold-water flats to apartments in Outremont, duplexes and homes in the suburbs. It was when we read of the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto and saw, in Montreal, the changeover from small *shuls* to big synagogues-cum-parochial-schools with stained glass windows and mosaics outside. During the war some of us lost brothers and cousins but in Canada we had never had it so good, and we began the run from rented summer shacks with outhouses in Shawbridge to Colonial-style summer houses of our own and speedboats on the lake in Ste. Agathe.

The war was when the concept of the ghetto became even more rigid in Montreal. German Jews, the argument went, were the most assimilated, and look what happened to them. Our antipathy for the *goyim* quickened. We wanted no part of them.

BACK in Montreal, living within the Jewish community once more, this time after an absence of seven years in Europe, I found the changes come about in so short a time astonishing.

As far as I can see it's still a matter of their Canada and ours, but on all levels, even among older Jews, there has been a disheartening adjustment to what we Canadians defensively call the American way of life. When I was a boy, we had already begun to discard anything that made us appear different. Some business and professional men Anglicized their names: Rabinovitch, let's say, was reborn Rice, and Lipschitz, Lane. But the children were still given sturdy Old Testament names. Today I find the children of even the most Orthodox families are, just as in the U.S., more likely to be called Neal, Stuart, Michele (for *Malke,* this), and Eugene. Naturally, the rabbis who serve such an up-to-date community are no longer severe men with splendid beards. Today's clean-shaven young rabbi, as you well know, is not so much a descendant of Hillel, Shammai, or the Baal Shem Tov, as a regular guy, like Norman Vincent Peale. He no longer threatens the community with God's terrible wrath but, instead, organizes father-and-son breakfasts, golf tournaments, and musical comedy-type Bar Mitzvahs.

Just as Americans come up here to look for hockey players, we scout the U.S. for modern rabbis. So, probably, the rabbi has come to Montreal or Toronto from, say, Cleveland. Most likely he has a Ph.D., his weekly column in the Toronto *Telegram* or Montreal *Star* is signed Dr., and deals with everything from "What Is True Happiness" to, say (for National Sports Week), "Jewish Athletes from Bar Kochba to Hank Greenberg." The most envied congregation would be the one with the rabbi who has appeared most often on television panel games.

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Still, there is a definite dichotomy of feeling about the U.S. here.

For even as the big city Jews here hasten to imitate the U.S., they also, as Canadians, have become more and more fiercely nationalistic in recent years. So, while the tone may be set for them by New York, they are aggressively proud that the Canadian dollar was, until recently, worth 103 American cents. Miami may still be necessary but, as Canadians, the Jews object to being pushed around by Washington. This is true socially too. For even as the community insists that its rabbis emulate the up-to-date Protestant minister, it is determined that the children should attend parochial schools. Jewish-sounding names may be abandoned, the children may very well have a tree for Christmas, but they will still live in ghettos. Yesterday there was one ghetto, today, as the Jews have moved out to suburbia, there are a series of such enclaves. No longer with much excuse, however. But when I put this to a seemingly assured young man, he replied, "Well, I just wouldn't feel comfortable living next door to a *goy*. All this brotherhood crap is meaningless. Underneath, they're still anti-Semites."

The same man told me that because many golf courses are still restricted the Jews have constructed clubs of their own. Recently, there was a crisis at one of these clubs. A young Jew brought along a friend of his, a Gentile, to play with him. The Gentile liked the course and the people he met there so much that he applied for membership. After much heart-searching his application was turned down. "Why?" I asked.

"Well, it wasn't that they had anything against him personally. But they did feel that if they let him in the others would apply. Soon, they'd all want to get in . . . and we'd be pushed into our own corner again."

"What if a Negro applied?"

"He'd be turned down. But not because he was colored. Only because he's a *goy*."

Well, in a sense it's amusing, even gratifying, to know that we Jews so recently off St. Urbain can now kick the *goyim* off our own golf, curling, and yacht clubs, but it's also very depressing. We've adjusted splendidly, sure. We're Canucks now, still a little off-white perhaps, but no longer as different as we were.

"It's no longer the same, is it?" an old friend said to me. "When we were kids if we came home from school and said our teacher was picking on us, we were told, 'if he's picking on you he has a good reason.' Today my oldest goes to the child psychiatrist twice a week. It's twenty-five bucks a crack." He had other, more damaging criticisms to make about the community. But like so many others he was careful to add, "Listen, it's sad. For all I know it's even shameful. But you mustn't tell the *goyim*. For them, it's ammunition."

So while our Jewish political leaders fatuously proclaim our Canadianism, even as they protest how very much at home we feel here, the Jews still live apart and in fear. It's still a question of their Canada, and ours. The Jews, assured in their own suburban camps, have only to step into the outside world to feel conspicuous and insecure.

ALL THIS may sound dreadfully familiar, and it should, for the Canadian Jew is (not unjustifiably) a would-be American. However, there are some subtle differences in our condition as compared to yours. The Jews in Canada have never taken as integral a part in the political and cultural life of their country as have the American Jews. True, we have been handed some political lollipops. There's a Jew in the Senate, another is an MP, and, in Quebec, there are now two Jewish judges, but there is no Jewish politician of stature in Canada, and, as I said before, our cultural capital is New York. This is not to say that the cultural bastions of Toronto—the book and magazine publishers, the CBC, what little theater there is—is anti-Semitic; far from it, but it is in *their* hands. Whereas, looking down on the cul-

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tural life of New York from here, it appears to be a veritable yeshiva. I won't even go into the question of Broadway or television, but from COMMENTARY by way of *Partisan Review* to the *Noble Savage,* from Knopf to Grove Press, the Jewish writers seem to call each to each, editing, praising, slamming one another's books, plays, and cultural conference appearances. So many of the talented young writers are Jews, and I'm sure, in New York, not one of them has been asked as I was recently asked at a party in Montreal, "When are you going to stop writing about the Main Street and Outremont? I mean, aren't you ever going to write about Canada?"

I HAVE, since my return to Montreal, been back to the Main again and again.

Today the original Young Israel Synagogue, where we used to chin the bar, is no longer there. A bank stands where my old poolroom used to be. Some familiar stores have gone. There have been deaths and bankruptcies. But most of the departed have simply packed up and moved with their old customers to the nearest of the new shopping centers at Van Horne or Rockland. And what are these centers if not tarted-up versions of the old Main, where you could do all your buying in a concentrated area and maybe get a special price through a cousin's cousin? Yesterday it was a dollar off because it's you, today it's the shopping stamp.

Up and down the Main you can still pick out many restaurants and steak houses wedged between the sweater factories, poolrooms, cold-water flats, wholesale dry goods stores, and "Your Most Sanitary" barbershops. The places where we used to work in summer as shippers for ten dollars a week are still there. So's Baron Byng High School, right where it always was. Rabbinical students and boys with sidecurls still pass. These, however, are the latest arrivals from Poland and Rumania and soon their immigrant parents will put pressure on them to study hard and make good. To get out.

But many of our own grandparents, the very same people who assured us the Main was only for *bummers* and failures, will not get out. Today when most of the children have made good, now that the sons and daughters have split-level bungalows and minks and winters in Miami, many of the grandparents still cling to the Main. Their children cannot in many cases persuade them to leave. So you still see them there, drained and used-up by the struggle. They sit on kitchen chairs next to the Coke freezer in the cigar and soda store, dozing with a fly-swatter in hand. You find them rolling their own cigarettes and studying the obituary column in the *Jewish Eagle* on the steps outside the Jewish Library. The women still peel potatoes on the stoop under the shade of a winding outside staircase. Old men still watch the comings and goings from the balcony above, a blanket spread over their legs and a little bag of polly seeds on their lap. As in the old days the sinking house with the crooked floor is often right over the store or the wholesaler's, or maybe next door to the junk yard. Only today the store and the junk yard are shut down. Signs for Sweet Caporal Cigarettes or old election posters have been nailed in over the missing windows. There are spiderwebs everywhere.

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A COMMENTARY REPORT

WHY STUDENTS LEAVE SCIENCE

EDGAR Z. FRIEDENBERG

I

WHY DO MANY American students drop the scientific careers which they have spent several years training for with reasonable success? This question is likely to seem more patriotic than scholarly to anyone who is a respecter of science both as an area of inquiry and as a method of scholarship. The missile race, with the values it expresses, has tended to put off any serious and disinterested study of what has been happening to competent youngsters who set out to become scientists in our society. Yet, quite apart from any imputation that students ought to have stayed in science either for their own sake or that of the nation, the self-image of the scientist and the relationship of his culture to that of the humanities, both in the academy and in daily life, is now a crucial issue in itself. The choice of a profession is the one commitment our culture really takes seriously: this is for keeps; it is not a matter, like love or loyalty, to be continually altered to fit new circumstances. Conflicts in this area, if they are serious enough to make youngsters change their plans dramatically and follow any discernible common pattern, are social phenomena worth studying.

At Brooklyn College during the academic year 1958–59, together with my colleague, economist Carl Nordstrom, I set about investigating whether such a pattern existed. The study is a small one as social science research goes in the mid-20th century. After a pilot operation confined to a group of twenty Brooklyn College students, we applied to and received from the Cooperative Research Division of the U. S. Office of Education support to extend the study to Ohio State and Stanford Universities during the year 1959–60.*

At these schools, we examined the student records, and asked those students who had switched from a major in one of the natural sciences (physical or biological) or in engineering—after having firmly established a satisfactory record in their major fields—to come in for a one-hour research session. For comparative purposes, we secured a sample of excellent students who were continuing in their scientific work.

The total number finally included in the study was 121: 20 from Brooklyn, 60 from Ohio State, and 41 from Stanford. Seventy-five of these had changed from science or engineering to another field; 46 formed our "control group," students who were continuing in science.

Our procedure was as follows: every student was given a deck of thirty-two cards, each of which contained a statement critical of science. These thirty-two critical estimates were meant to be pieces of cautionary advice that might be given to a younger person trying to make up his mind whether or not to become a scientist. The student read all the cards, then sorted them into seven

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* Both these institutions most generously provided us with every resource we requested, though neither was a party to our research contract or received any compensation whatever for what they gave us. I mention this simply as evidence that the academic community is still as much a reality as the more conspicuous academic market place.

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piles (containing, respectively, 1; 3; 7; 10; 7; 3; 1 cards) from the soundest to the most misleading or silliest statement. In other words, the first pile—of one card—contained the subject's estimate of the best advice that could be given to a potential science student; the last pile—again of one card—contained the worst advice.

Immediately after this sorting, an interview with the student was recorded. It began with a question as to whether there were any important things the student might have wanted to advise his imaginary young friend that the cards did not cover. After discussing the subject's answer to this question—it was usually, but not always, negative—he was asked to discuss why he had placed the cards he had chosen in the four extreme piles.

There is no basis for inferring that our 121 subjects are representative of all science students in the country. In fact, they could not be, if only because only about half of those invited took part in the research; and science students who are willing to participate in an unfamiliar research project clearly have a different attitude toward science than those who ignored such a request. Even though our 121 may be atypical in various ways, however, they are still of interest for what they are in themselves. A fact is still a fact, whether or not it can be generalized. The story of Marat and Charlotte Corday is of itself enough to disprove the canard that 18th-century Frenchmen never took baths.

OF THE THIRTY-TWO CARDS, seven elicited sharply different responses from the students who have left science or engineering and from those who are continuing in these fields. Three of the seven cards deal with whether scientists get enough money to justify the time and trouble they spend on their training. The texts of these cards read:

> 2. Scientists' salaries may seem high enough usually, but since they usually work for a company or university on a pure annual basis, they have much less chance than doctors, say, or lawyers, to do well for themselves.
>
> 3. Over a lifetime, perhaps, a person with a Ph.D. in one of the sciences will earn about as much as other professionals; but it takes him so long to get up there with the others that he and his family have quite a struggle.
>
> 4. As professional people, scientists have to expect to move socially among people who earn just enough more than they do to keep them in a state of mild but unpleasant tension.

Students who had *left* science tended to reject these cards as containing unimportant or misleading advice more severely than did the students who were continuing. The members of the control group were more willing to admit that these items might be legitimate complaints against a career that nevertheless appealed to them on balance. (When control subjects *did* reject these cards, they were likely to do so on the grounds that their information was misleading, out of date, while students who had abandoned science usually stressed that the money was just not that important to them.)

A fourth card which resulted in sharp differences discussed an unfavorable public image of the scientist. It was extremely unpopular with the students who had abandoned careers in science, but the control group distributed it almost by chance. It reads:

> 5. People are really pretty ambivalent toward scientists. Officially, they are highly respected, but the stereotype of the mad scientist is seldom wholly absent from the mind of the man in the street.

As one Brooklyn College student who had changed from physics to English put it: "I felt that a scientist should just have a love for his work if he goes into it at all, and so, even if there was such a stereotype—I don't know that there is—this should not concern him in the least." Hardly anyone who rejected this card did so because he thought it was a false statement. Generally, they *did* think so, but just did not much care whether it was or not.*

* Margaret Mead and Rhoda Metraux, however, in their milestone study of the "Image of the Scientists Among High School Students" (*Science*, 126, August 30, 1957) found the "mad-scientist" image one of the most widespread and influential components of the students' image of the scientist.

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THE REMAINING three card choices that distinguish the students who have left science from the control group are all cards that the former science students *favor* as important pieces of advice. And all deal with different aspects of the same issue—the training, method, and approach of scientists. The control group both *dislikes* and rejects the first of these cards, which discusses scientific training. Three of them pick it as the worst card—and none pick it as the best, while two of the ex-science group pick it as the best card and none pick it as the worst.

> *23.* Contrary to what one usually expects, scientific training actually seems to offer little encouragement to independence of thought. There is more lecturing and less discussion than in other disciplines; the examinations tend to be rather petty and factual. Even the lecturer's jokes are listed in the syllabus.

Mr. Perry, a bright, personable Ohio State senior who switched from engineering to business management, explained why he picked this card as his first choice.

> PERRY: If this guy was going into engineering with the idea of gaining indepen . . . of being independent and having a broad concept of things . . . the subjects he's going to be taking are very limited and I don't think they encouraged really independent thinking. What they encouraged was the ability to, well, deal with specific mechanical processes in solving problems . . . . In most of the examinations in engineering, if you forgot the formula, well, you just don't solve the problem. Which puts a premium on memorizing certain mechanical things . . . . It doesn't really lend itself to general discussion because, well, there's not much question about it.

By contrast, Mr. Wheeler, one of the most successful engineering students at Ohio State, rates the same card as the worst. Yet, in his comments, he agrees fairly well with Mr. Perry as to how things are. The contrast is largely between Mr. Perry's short-term irritation and Mr. Wheeler's long-range identification with his vocational goal:

> WHEELER: I think actually lecturing, discussing a topic, the more familiar the scientist's professor becomes with his subject, as far as I can see, the more prepared he is to do basic research. It has to get to be, so that he knows these facts and principles upside down, backwards, in his sleep.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Possibly there is more opportunity for discussion in the arts, but that probably stems from the fact that so many of the arts questions are not, actually, don't have one answer, while such things as two and two is always four. There's not too much discussion you can carry on about it.

The second of these three cards, on scientific method, is also rejected by members of the control group, though not as sharply. It reads:

> *25.* The scientific method, as it is taught in the classroom and thought of by the general run of scientists, actually hampers efforts to understand many problems. Insight into the way things develop, and their unique, particular meaning, are sacrificed to rigid experimental control and statistical generality in order to keep the research scientifically respectable.

And the control group scatters the last card in a chance pattern; most of the ex-scientists, however, are solidly behind it. It reads:

> *26.* The scientist's commitment to place objectivity first, while it has made science the instrument of empirical mastery of the environment, ultimately limits his power to penetrate to fundamental meanings. With so much of human experience tending toward depersonalization, it is just those perceptions that cannot be "consensually validated" that are often of crucial importance.

The subjects who leave science and engineering, then, insist that their feelings are the source of their integrity; and consider them more important than their economic or social aspirations. They must, therefore, demand respect for them and act them out at once. The students who remain may be equally critical of the limitations of scientific truth and of the society in which they must function—though they generally are not as critical. But they are either less confident of their ability to find any spot outside the system in which they would be any freer than they would be in science, or more confident

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that if they accept the system they will ultimately find themselves within it. Some seem to combine these two feelings, like Mr. Byron, a Stanford electrical engineer: young, married, cool; bright and sharp as a hound's tooth.

BYRON: I don't think it's the best use of me, but I'm in it now—up to the hilt. I mean, you know, after you get two years of school. I'm perfectly satisfied. I enjoy myself in electrical engineering; it's just that I would have enjoyed myself more in other fields .... I do like the technical side of engineering. It's just that I wish there were more of a creative aspect to it than there is. I won't be unhappy in engineering .... I don't enjoy being with purely intellectuals, either .... People that are for Adlai ... madly for Adlai and join political causes. ... I'm for Adlai myself, but not madly.

.....

There was the funniest headline: "Nixon will try to run as an individual if nominated." He's not going to run as an elephant, he's going to run as an individual, if he possibly can.

INTERVIEWER: *Card 23* ["scientific training actually seems to offer little encouragement to independence of thought"]?

BYRON: Well, it's true. What's there to discuss?

INTERVIEWER: Then, your most extreme negative card: *Card 5* ["mad scientist" public image]?

BYRON: Yes, I think it's silly. So what? Who is the man on the street? You just don't go fiddling around with the man on the street if you're a scientist.

INTERVIEWER: Any other comments you'd care to add?

BYRON: No. I think I've discussed my reasons for being slightly down on scientists. Definitely an interesting profession; it's just that these people get a slight case of narrow brain. That's just about it.

In Mr. Byron's manner there was nothing at all supercilious or snide. A wiry, bronzed, clean-shaven young man, clad in a sport shirt, jeans, and a pair of *zori* sandals; he broke the toe-strap on one of these by the ardor of his gestures during the interview. "May I?" he inquired politely at the end; and, dropping the *zori* into the wastebasket, strode out of the research office and into the Western world, barefoot.

II

ANALYZING THE CARD-SORTS of these young men and women by another statistical procedure yields, not a set of individual numerical scores, but clusters of individuals who tend to see things in similar ways.* (It produces as well isolated individuals whose card-sorts are different from all others.) There is no magic in this; how many clusters are produced, if any, is as much a consequence of the particular levels of significance the research worker selects as it is of the way the subjects sort the cards. One selects levels of significance that yield the fineness or coarseness of discrimination warranted by the character of the data. *Our* choices yielded us eight clusters of from five to nineteen students, amounting to a total of 64 of the 121 subjects. Thus, 57 of our subjects were not assigned to any group on the basis of their card-sort.

The largest cluster contains nineteen members. They include students from Brooklyn, Ohio, and Stanford, and from both pure science and engineering curricula. Eleven of the nineteen have abandoned science or engineering; eight are continuing. We call this group our *eclectic* cluster.

The favorite cards of the *eclectic* cluster are *17* and *31* which read:

17. The work of the laboratory scientist is less varied and engrossing than the image of the pioneer serving mankind in his laboratory would lead you to expect. Most scientists spend most of their time in rather dull, routine activity.

31. The costs of scientific research today have tied science so closely to the purposes of elite groups in society that it has abandoned most of its critical and skeptical function. When you are dependent on tax exemptions and foundation grants in order to get your work

* Readers familiar with research methodology in the behavioral sciences will recognize what is described here as an application of William Stephenson's Q-technic. See *The Study of Behavior* (University of Chicago Press, 1953).

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done, you get to be pretty careful never to catch Truth in embarrassing commerce with Mars or Mammon.

Two cards that most of our subjects reject but that the members of the *eclectic* cluster dislike with special intensity are:

8. Scientists don't seem to live like other upper-middle-class people, even when they are quite successful. They tend to have fewer interests outside their work in things like the arts, or even in other people, so that life can get pretty dreary.

and:

21. While there are many exceptions, groups of scientists are generally not as pleasant to be among as other intellectuals. On the whole they tend to be stiffer and somewhat less broad-minded and sophisticated; they hardly seem to know how to enjoy themselves.

MR. RABINOW, a Brooklyn College senior recommended to our study as one of the most promising young chemists in the graduating class of 1959, illustrates very vividly, though with a manner and volubility that are purely Brooklyn, and a sensitivity that is purely his own, some of the characteristic attitudes of the *eclectic* cluster. On the one hand, there is a compelling—almost a compulsive—identification that leads the subject to insist that he likes science and scientists (whether or not he himself is going on in it). On the other hand, there is a nagging preoccupation with the daily annoyances of scientific work under the conditions in which it must actually be done. Mr. Rabinow explains his choice of *Card 17*:

RABINOW: Well, I've had opportunities, see. I work after school. I work for a big chemical company, and I see what most research chemists are expected to do . . . . Only Ph.D. chemists do actual research. The way they set it up, most of it is dull routine activity . . . . I mean, once in a while you come up with an idea, I mean, that's the fascinating part; but then to go through the synthesis and the library work, I mean, that's actually a big part of science, really, and that is dull and routine . . . . I suppose everybody says Hollywood-type scientists are something glorious, and that's not really true.

. . . . . .

It's dull and routine, the work, *but it leads to something* [italics are ours] . . . . I mean, you know you're going . . . the work itself is dull and routine, then you get satisfaction after it's all over and accomplished.

. . . . . .

I know I like a certain kind of recognition when I do a certain type of work. See, the work I do is nothing really, I mean, to be recognized, but on my level, naturally, there isn't any. But even on higher levels, it's always emphasized—one man never gets the credit, it's always four or five men have done it. Usually the—I know this would bother me—I mean the—usually the research director gets his name on it even though he had nothing to do with it, and then other people, you know, sometimes the vice-president, they might stick his name on there too, to show, you know, like a dedication to a symphony or something to your patron sort of kind of thing, and I just don't feel that this is right . . . . In other words, you know, apple-polishing is very prevalent; if you want to get somewhere, you've got to be able to toe the line and show them that, you know, you're with them—very little dissension. Everybody's smooth and calm. No arguments, no fights.

. . . . . .

Let's say that I'm not particularly satisfied with my work now, but . . . well, after I get out of graduate school, if I go back into industry, I don't feel that it'll be, I don't expect—let's say, I *hope* it will be different, but I don't expect it to be much different from now. . . . This is the way it is.

. . . . . .

It's really hard for me to say exactly why, the general question, why I chose science. I never had a chemistry set. When I wanted to do some things, I couldn't do it at my house. I mean, my parents couldn't see it, you know. I did fool around a little bit; but right away they were on my back for fooling around. Once, I even developed some pictures, and this annoyed my father because of the acetic acid smell; he didn't like it, so that was the end of that . . . . I don't know, I was just curious about different things, and I thought that in science you have opportunity, really, to see a lot of different things . . . really, you need extensive training . . . . I try to tell myself, from

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the way I talk, I try to tell myself that the thing that I'm looking after in life is not a lot of money. That's the way I feel. [Pause] I feel that I just want to make, naturally, a comfortable living and then devote myself to, oh, reading and learning and things. . . . I also enjoy, well, working with my hands. I enjoy that, and not as a hobby, but more as a career. I rather enjoy that. And science lends itself most to that. . . . I rather like to work with my hands; it fascinates me and I get pleasure out of it.

. . . . . .

Anyway, it's remarkable the way things fit in . . . . Through high school I got the job where I work now, and when I started to work, well, I mean, they had students working there who were working nights and going to full-time day school and they said, "Well, why don't you do this?" . . . and I started to day school. And everything worked out for the best . . .[*sotto voce*] in the best of all possible worlds.

Though mundane in their attitudes and concerned with the realities of the scientist's or engineer's working life, the members of the eclectic cluster are not happy about those realities as they see them; too modest or not confident enough to make large claims for the authority of their inner life, they nevertheless display that life vividly in their reactions to conditions they hardly hope to transcend. They may continue, as Mr. Rabinow is continuing, in science. But if they do so, their level of aspiration is appreciably low; they haven't much hope of attaining distinction.

An Ohio State member of this cluster, continuing in geology and doing extremely well in it, speaks in this way of his burgeoning career: "I like to study geology, but I'm not sure yet exactly what field of geology. And I don't know, I'm afraid that if I'm married soon and have a family, I might just have to drop geology just to work, so I could make some money." The "experimental" members of the *eclectic* cluster, though perhaps more sensitive to petty details of their experience as science students than to larger value or epistemological issues, at least have the ego-strength and detachment to make a break. Mr. Eero, a stalwart, roughly handsome ex-engineer of Finnish stock, falls into this group. Commenting on *Card 17,* which is his first choice among the thirty-two, Mr. Eero says:

EERO: I think everybody, when thinking of a profession, tends to glamorize it. There is a lot of routine to any kind of job . . . . I think of people like Madame Curie, for instance, and her husband, who worked for I don't know how many years shoveling pitchblende around . . . . All my experience has been that science requires a great deal of precision, and precision sometimes for precision's sake. And, thus, there is a certain going over of things. I think there is a certain amount of scientific work that is dull no matter what level you reach. Even a guy like Einstein has to sit down and work out mathematical formulas, go through a lot of pages and pages of work, and I imagine there are times when they wish they could skip that part . . . . This is to tell someone who you're talking with who's thinking of choosing science. Now if a person is . . . there are people happy doing things that I couldn't do for two minutes, and this is something that a person has to look into and not glorify science as standing in a white coat and "Eureka–" because very little of it is that.

The *eclectic* cluster is not only the largest cluster yielded by the methodology of the study; it is statistically the most central. Its characteristics do not contrast with those of the total group of subjects so much as they emphasize certain of them. The popular cards that warn against the tendency of science to deny subjective truth are distributed within the *eclectic* cluster very much as they are by the total group of subjects. But the *eclectic* cluster is especially troubled about the daily ennui in a scientist's life, and especially reluctant to imagine that ennui transcended by noble vision or purpose, or by heroic individual capacity. No man is a hero to the *eclectic* cluster. Which is, after all, the way we live now.

THERE IS, however, a subsidiary and somewhat less clearly delineated focus of central tendency in the total group which produces a cluster of twelve individuals. We call this the *adolescent* cluster, because its members share a common preoccupation with their own identity and their peculiar

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perception of the meaning of life. They talk about what it means to be *them* endlessly, enthusiastically, and also refreshingly and well.

The *adolescent* cluster emphasizes cards *23, 25, 26,* and *27* far more than most of our subjects do. The first three of these have been quoted; *Card 27* reads:

> *27.* An interest in science is, to some extent, something many people in this culture need to grow *through.* · An American adolescent, if he has any spontaneous curiosity about the world he lives in at all, almost has to couch his interest in scientific terms, for these are the terms available. But when he gets far enough, he may well find that the questions science can answer are no longer the questions he must ask.

All four of these cards warn against various ways in which scientific rigidity may exclude or impose upon elements of intuition or poetic vision.

The archetype of our *adolescent* cluster is Mr. Hughes, a big, attractive, highly articulate Stanford junior whose interview, rather to his own astonishment, went on for well over an hour. Here is a part of it:

> HUGHES: If you're going to do something you're interested in, you might as well base your education on your interests at the same time. I consider this rather a valid argument.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> INTERVIEWER: Your mother [Hughes's father is deceased] was anxious for you to enter engineering, or what?
>
> HUGHES: No, she was just worried that philosophy was highly out of date as a paying profession. This is the question I get from everyone: "Well, what in the world are you going to do?" and I smile and answer "I don't know, and it really doesn't matter at the moment," because it doesn't. I'm considering teaching as a profession, and I have a summer job as a teacher in prep school which I will find out just how I like it . . . . I feel profoundly happier. . . . I find that everything I do, from every discussion I have over coffee on a casual date, or every book I read, every magazine, everything I hear, do, and see is somehow related to everything I'm doing.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> [Of engineering] I, as I said, was profoundly disappointed in all my classes. Math has been one of my best subjects all my life. It was quite easy for me. I had no trouble in the math courses; the same with the engineering courses. It just came easy, but it wasn't anything there—like sand in soup . . . . A lot of this comes from just realization—it's just one awakening after another, and a lot of these interests I didn't know I had. I didn't know how much I was interested in literature or religion or philosophy because I'd not had an introduction to these, and my life had been full of engineering. I hadn't read but about one or two books in *four years* [emphasis Hughes's].
>
> . . . . . .
>
> I like engineering. I like math. Math, to me, is art. I like it. I like the way things work out and I like engineering. I will still fiddle with it. I still have junk, electronics stuff in my garage at home and, off and on, kick around with all the time. But the big thing is there's nothing there, nothing I can get my hands on . . . . It's just things that are not covered and I feel that engineering is . . . would limit me too much.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> I still don't know exactly what I want to go into and this sometimes worries me . . . . But, no; the inner struggle has been pretty much settled. It was rough turmoil for a while but, once I accepted it—accepted the fact that I wasn't an engineer . . . I mean, it's just round; it's nice, inner calm, peace and perfectly satisfied. I know, in general, where I'm going, and how I'm going to get there. I know what I like and, in general, of course this is always changing; it's expanding . . . . It's not because I did not like engineering. I have an awful lot of respect for the guys who can just, in a sense, throw away their lives and settle for just having things cut out for them, and that's—what time is it getting to be?

ANOTHER STANFORD MEMBER of the *adolescent* cluster, Mr. Grant, comments on the reasons for his change from engineering to political science. Mr. Grant's style is less effulgent than Mr. Hughes's; he broods along like the young adult Westerner that he is. But similar feelings have been stirring the two boys:

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GRANT: As far as a career is based, when I changed, I threw away virtually a set career and a job in companies I could have gone to work for, knowing that what I was going to study now was what I wanted to study. I'd just take a chance on what I'd find. I figured I'd find my place.

. . . . . .

These friends of mine, they were also engineers, they just took this [training in engineering theory] in a way that was just foreign to my nature, because I've seen too many people—young engineers in jobs, I've worked with them—who come out and know it right out of the books but don't have the slightest idea how to get a job done. And I turned away from this, and I knew that I could never be that way and I began to kind of re-examine what I really wanted; I found that engineering wasn't what I really wanted . . . . So, finally I decided it was time to get out . . . . I'd rather get the kind of education that would do me . . . that I'd feel would do me the most good in the long run, and that is a broader, liberal education.

INTERVIEWER: Yes. Do you what sort of good?

GRANT: Just being more [pause]—this is the question, because the things that I figure are . . . least important is the economic angle, because I figure that if I can get the liberal education, why I can make a living anyway; if you've got a college degree you stand a reasonably good chance of making a living. I'm not out to get rich in this world, because there's so much of this world that I don't understand and want to find out about; and I don't think you find it in math books or engineering books. And I know I'll probably never find it, and I know it's very, very easy to think about these things. . . . It's very easy to be all involved with these ideas while you're in school; but I can sit around in a discussion and talk about these ideas and philosophies and different things; and you can walk right out and never think about them again. I'm just more interested in the ideas of politics and political action and theories of government and the way men are, the way men work, why men do things, than I am in building roads for men to drive on. That's it. . . . I don't have any false illusions about going out on any big campaign of any ideal, and that's just it: I'd like to try and sell these ideas [earlier in the interview Mr. Grant had expressed a specific, rather conservative social ideology] or try and influence a few people; but yet, I really don't know whether my ideas are as yet that important or that good. And if I should come to the conclusion that I did have some ideas that could be of some use, I really don't know how I could go about trying to spread them. . . . This way, I don't . . . at the present time have the same connections and ins, but I think I'll find what I'm more interested in here. I don't know where it'll lead me; lead me along the lines I'm more interested in following.

FROM Mr. Hughes's and Mr. Grant's comments one would infer that the *adolescent* cluster must be composed of youngsters who are lost to science; and it is. Only one member of it—Mr. Bond, of Ohio State—is still in a scientific field. Mr. Bond is a healthy-looking, jolly, crew-cut young man. But he is not exactly a conventional type scientist.

BOND: In my mind, to really do something, you've got to have a skill. It takes more than just aspirations. And you've got to have a certain amount of specific skill that you can offer. I'm talking in terms of humanitarian endeavor, if you want. . . . I'd like to be the organizational type in WHO [World Health Organization] or something like that, if you want. A man in WHO working, I think, can accomplish more than Schweitzer. . . . Schweitzer has become quite a symbol. He has, there's no doubt about it. A young man, you like to think—at least I do—"What can I do with my life, which I consider to be really valuable?" . . . And to me, service is the biggest concept. It really is. Along with, of course, in the end, I'm trying to achieve personal happiness. Let's not get away from that.

. . . . . .

Science is not an end in itself to me. It's merely, once you go far enough in science, I think that you do have to jump again to other questions, because I think science stops and, if you want, philosophy and a lot of other questions begin to pick up a little bit. And I couldn't. I think you could say that I'm a scientifically trained person with goals

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which are strictly not scientific research, but an application of science to man. So I guess you would call me, well, a humanist.

. . . . . .

So, independence of thought; if one just took science courses, I'd feel like he was just regurgitating. Until you reach the state, now . . . that might take me toward research eventually way further on, that you know science so well there's no more regurgitating. From there, it's newness; and if I could find newness in science, there'd be a real challenge.

. . . . . .

It's been very interesting to be able to sit and analyze. I've thought about this . . . *or else I would have switched out of the curriculum of science which I'm now in* [our emphasis]. And I couldn't go ahead and be a doctor. I'd become a philosopher; but, to me, being a philosopher all of your life isn't achieving what I'd like to achieve very generally. There is a temptation for a young man, I think, once you begin to be exposed to thinking and to new thoughts and to philosophy and to more general readings, and Tillich and a few other gentlemen, to want to do more thinking and less learning of facts. Original thought. And I'd like with science to lead an original life . . . and it's not a life that's so set up that it's rigid to begin with. It's very general. I can't tell exactly what fate is going to take me into, but I can only define things as I clearly see them now. They may change in the future.

The cards the *adolescent* cluster rejects, as might be expected, are the money and status cards (*1* through *5*, and *8*).*

MR. BOND, with his interest in service and in having an impact on the society in which he lives, and his willingness to function within a group like WHO, illustrates rather clearly the characteristics of another cluster to which our procedure assigns him; and he shows how it is related to the *adolescent* one. This ancillary cluster, which we call the *societal* cluster, has eight members, all of whom, except Mr. Bond, have given up on science. (Three of these—including Mr. Bond and Mr. Hughes—also fall into our *adolescent* cluster.†) The same cards which the *adolescent* cluster tends to interpret as warnings that scientific training may stifle a student's inner flame and deafen him to the unverifiable comments of his inner voice, the *societal* cluster tends to interpret as warnings against ignoring matters of personal concern in their external lives. The *adolescent* members can thus take the reference (on *Card 27*) to the possibility that "The questions science can answer are no longer the questions he must ask" as an allusion to their deeper subjective interests; while members of the *societal* are reminded of the broader social and political commitments that they might have made. Mr. Bond illustrates the juxtaposition of these two kinds of concern; Mr. Hughes much less so.

Just as the *adolescent* cluster has the *societal* cluster overlapping it from the general direction, ideologically speaking, of the left, the *eclectic* cluster has an ancillary cluster of eleven subjects, overlapping it from the right.** What is exaggerated in these eleven subjects is the "conventionality" of the *eclectic* cluster. Among them, the control group members seem almost to parody conventionality in their acceptance of their world and in their reduction of every fundamental conflict to the most stereotyped terms.†† The students who have abandoned science, on the other hand, seem to have failed to establish their identity.

The qualities of conventionality are revealed by the subjects' slight tendency to accept *Card 1*, "Scientists make too little

* *Card 1*, which has not yet been quoted, reads simply: "Scientists make too little money in the course of a lifetime, compared to people in other professions, to justify the costs of getting a doctor's degree." It is the most general of the money cards; and also the most generally rejected by all subjects. For convenience in analyzing, cards dealing with related issues were numbered consecutively, but were presented in random order.

† Two members of the twelve-person *adolescent* cluster are also grouped, through other portions of their card-choice pattern, into the central *eclectric* cluster; but no member of the *societal* cluster is.

** Three members overlap—a smaller proportion in this case—and the cluster represents an exaggeration of some of the characteristics of *eclectic* cluster in a comparable way. This cluster also includes former science students or engineers and controls. Its members are drawn from all three schools.

†† Two of these, however, recent arrivals from Northern Europe—one is returning to Norway as soon as he has finished his degree—thus have less reason to be concerned with subtler aspects of the American way of life.

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money . . ." as sound advice, while most other subjects reject it; and by the tendency to reject as nonsensical the cards which emphasize the conflict between science and subjective aspects of experience. These subjects emphasize even more than those of the *eclectic* cluster that science is full of "dull, routine, activity"—Mr. Rabinow is one of the overlapping members—but like the *eclectics,* the *conventionals* also insist that scientists have just as much fun as anybody. "They're people," an Ohio State student continuing in engineering school reported, "scientists are people, educated people. Enjoy getting together, enjoy parties. I don't think I could exist without my golf in the summertime." Another commented: "Many of my friends are engineers or pure scientists or mathematicians and I find that they tend to like music, art; they believe very well in girls—and outside of working hours they're . . . you couldn't stereotype them as scientists at all." Miss Larinn, an attractive and very bright young chemist, who is one of the European subjects in the *conventional* cluster, clearly illustrates the sometimes illogical positivism of this group:

> LARINN: Well, well science doesn't deal with philosophical understanding of problems. It's true that you cannot gain a philosophical understanding of the problem through the scientific method. On the other hand, I think it's impossible to solve any scientific problem through a philosophical approach.

Finally, a last comment by a Stanford economics major (who has not been able to "pin down" why engineering "didn't agree with me"):

> I think that the empirical method will make a lot of things that are now important to people in philosophy, make dead issues out of an awful lot of things. . . . Where now the lot is conjecture, there'll be empirical bases for conclusions later on, and that's going to limit such fields as philosophy quite a bit, and religion. It's going to be a little bit rough on these people.

III

THE FOUR CLUSTERS so far described comprise the core of our sample and include slightly over a third of its members. We take these clusters, and the common attitudes that generated them, then, to lie at the heart of our problem. Arranging the clusters in terms of the social attitudes they represent, one can order them, moving from left to right, as follows: *societal, adolescent, eclectic,* and *conventional.*

One very unsettling point emerges from this classification. *There are no more science students in our left field.* Our method identifies and groups together youngsters who share a noble and sensitive vision of themselves and their place in the universe, and who *once* planned to become scientists or engineers. They do not plan to do so now. They have been repelled either by what they regard as excessive limitations on their chance to respond and to take account of their own feelings, or by an equally distasteful limitation on their chance to do anything that is both original and useful. Similarly, our method also identifies and groups together youngsters who seem willing to accept, on the whole, the world they live in and who come to the usual terms with it. One group, indeed, the *conventional,* seems unable even to imagine any real alternatives to the values and assumptions of that world: these students defend science and scientists (even though some have left the field in response to various comparatively disorganized feelings of personal dissatisfaction with the way science works today). Others in these two clusters are going ahead as planned.

But have they such stuff as science is made of? In a sense, yes, for it will be made of what they have. Meanwhile, however, the poets and philosophers have packed up, packed it in, and left. An occasional original like Mr. Byron remains as an individual or as a member of a small cluster distinct from the core group. But we have no cluster of brilliant, creative youngsters who expect to fulfill their destiny and their inner vision *within science.* There are many such youngsters; there are enough just at Stanford to lead an immodest visitor to wonder whether he may not have died and passed on to his reward without noticing it. Science and engineering, though, do not hold them.

By way of contrast, we do have a small, five-man cluster composed entirely of highly successful, continuing Ohio State science and engineering students, which in its card choices and comments, treats science as

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would a group of comfortable "old pros." Its members see *Card 17*—"dull, routine"—simply as trivial, leaving it in the middle of the distribution; and like most of the controls, they vigorously reject *23* and *25*, which deal with the deleterious effects of scientific training and method. But they never seem defensive in the quality of their responses. As one subject said: "I do not feel that science is against religion or religion is against science. I feel that they are perfectly compatible. . . . I think that the scientist and the theologians are coming closer together in their attitudes in working together, and I think that in the future this controversy will die out." To this cluster, both science and religion are against sin and ignorance, and, therefore, are bound to triumph; they are quite intelligent enough to be able to agree afterward on a satisfactory division of their proper spheres of influence.

These are nice guys (one of them is a nice girl) and, as they say, "no sweat." They are committed, though not dedicated, to science or engineering, and they will make good, solid, contributions that will get bigger and better as they learn their way around. They are conventional—their cluster lies closer to the *conventional* cluster than to any other—in their own way, but they are not twitchy. They'll do just fine. In the idiom of fifty years ago, one might have said of them that they would never set the world on fire. Today—well, these are the kind of competent young men and women who get their job done.*

The "old pros" are more mature and better adjusted than the *adolescents*. But it seems to me that this means merely that as late adolescents continue to grow up in the United States they find life easier, and are granted more opportunities with fewer conflicts, if the "old pro" values are the ones that come naturally to them. They are more mature in the sense that they are more like successful adults already, and therefore less threatening. But they are not more mature in the sense of being more nearly ready to bear the rich harvest of which the human species, under favorable conditions, is capable.

I AM NOT enough of a nationalist to wish to keep in science the ardent and promising youngsters who leave it, nor even convinced that it would be in the national interest, whatever that may be, to do so. But it does seem to me that the experiences that drive them out have far less to do with science as either a method or an epistemological system than they do with science as a social institution. Those of our best subjects who left did so because of the way scientists are taught and the way they are used; not because of what science essentially is. After all, it is our respondents who believe that science deals with deep and fundamental issues of being, who are correct. But undergraduates do not get much chance to get down to fundamentals.

It would seem that the sensible way for a nation to retain such youngsters as future scientists and engineers would be to try to improve the way they are taught and to modify the opportunities open to them in their later employment so as to provide a legitimate expectation of personal autonomy in work. But this is not the way our culture is actually going about it. Instead, subject after subject in our study complains that the *way* the high school led him into science confused him and made it much harder for him to see just how his career choice was going to affect his life and his image of himself. From an adolescent, considering what it is he has to do to grow up, this is a very serious charge against secondary education.

Mr. Perry, the first subject quoted in this article, and an ex-engineering member of the *adolescent* cluster in excellent standing, is rather sardonic about his high-school experience:

> PERRY: Well, I think it's just because all through my high school that we had sort of the idea that the, you know, the engineer was the person that was—actually, it was just a bunch of propaganda—that the engineer was the person who was going to be successful . . . which I fully believe now is entirely a fallacy. . . . I don't—nobody actually told me this, but it just seemed to be the

* C. P. Snow's Minister of Production, Thomas Bevill, is a little blunter about them. " 'It's funny about those chaps,' he reflected, 'I used to think scientists were supermen. But they're not supermen, are they? Some of them are brilliant, I grant you that. But between you and me, Eliot, a good many of them are like garage hands. Those are the chaps who are going to blow us all up.' " *The New Men*, pp. 67–68.

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general consensus of opinion . . . that if you were a boy and did well in math and had a natural adaption [*sic*] for mechanical drawing, well, that "you just come over here and be in engineering." . . . [Then, in college] I just began to think, well now, if doing twenty calculus problems every night, that it's just sort of busy work, really, and, well, I just didn't like it *at all.* I began to think "Well, now, is this what I'm preparing for?" and if I'm going to be using this after I graduate, I don't even *want* to be using it after I graduate. And so, if I'm not going to use it, why am I doing it now?

Mr. Hughes, at the opening of his interview, in response to the "Is there anything that has been left out that you would care to add" probe of the interviewer, stated flatly:

HUGHES: Now, my decision was made on the grounds that I didn't want to be an engineer—that I *wasn't* an engineer —and my reasons for being in engineering lie, inherently, in the California state public school system,* is being that for the person of above average ability and interest there are only two outlets in the curricula of the California high schools which allow for any expansion, any room to vent any extra ability and interest—and these are the math and physical science fields. . . . And my last two years in high school were spent preparing for an engineering career. Everyone said, "You'll make a *great* engineer!" . . . It's a very easy process. . . . Now, in our graduating class, we had 77 people, and of the about 30 boys in that class that went through the last two years with me in math and science classes—same group went all the way through—there are two left in engineering. . . . But so many go in; it's easy, it's nice, "Oh, you're going to be an engineer, scientist!"

Of course, sometimes the process works, and when it does, the experience may take the form described by Mr. Valcic, esteemed at Ohio State as one of its best young chemical engineers. Explaining his career choice, he says:

VALCIC: Well, in high school, I took an examination with an employment bureau in which our skills were investigated. I was told that I had the ability and understanding of knowledge to do just about anything. And so, well, I had been interested in the scientific field, engineering and so on. I took a scholarship test and received a scholarship to go into chemical engineering. Well, since I'm in it, and I am having all my education paid for, it would be somewhat foolish to go out of engineering, considering that I have the ability to understand engineering as such; and to me, it doesn't make too much difference in what field I actually make my living. Personally, if I hadn't gotten this scholarship, I would have gone into agriculture. Not to have come to college and studied, but just started farming. Try to run farming as a business rather than just a way of life.

Mr. Valcic, I think, may be allowed to have the last word. It figures.

* Technically, Mr. Hughes should have referred to the Monterey County School System; California schools are not organized into a state system.

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CONTROVERSY

PORNOGRAPHY & CENSORSHIP

The discussion we present this month grew out of PAUL GOODMAN'S *article, "Pornography, Art & Censorship," which appeared in the March* COMMENTARY. RICHARD LICHTMAN, *who here takes issue with Mr. Goodman, is assistant professor of philosophy at the University of Kansas City in Missouri. A reply by Goodman follows.*

Mr. Lichtman writes:

Paul Goodman has made what seems to me a dangerous defense of freedom in the area of pornography. It is not that he goes too far; he does not go far enough, and he gives, in part, the wrong reasons for traveling at all. Mill noted in the introduction to *On Liberty* that previous social reform had been concerned to alter the standards by which individual experience had been controlled, but that it had failed to ask the basic question—the right of society to any control over the individual. Mr. Goodman is engaged in the first kind of social reform, though on a much higher level than anything we are commonly used to. He has the eye of the social engineer, and his first concern is to replace the current corruption of sexual morality with a climate that is more humane. I do not wish to question his evaluation; but merely to note that his suggestions suffer from the same deficiency that has plagued social reformers from Plato to Lenin—an insufficient respect for the right of men to alter through their *own* decisions the social structures that control their lives.

Mr. Goodman seems to argue for an increase of freedom in the area of sexual communication, but two fundamental questions persist: (1) What does Mr. Goodman mean by freedom? and (2) What is his justification for the freedom he wishes to defend? The first question is important because social philosophers as non-democratic as the Catholic right and the Communist left have argued that their own highly regimented systems are in perfect harmony with freedom. This has been accomplished by redefining "freedom" to fit the structure of controls. We shall return to this matter in a moment, but let us consider briefly the crucial problem of justification. The defense of freedom is far from irrelevant, for whether it is supported merely as a means to further values or as itself a constituent of that form of human existence which is intrinsically good is a question of the first importance. Mill began his defense of freedom as a means to the greatest happiness of the greatest number, but was soon led to complain against the growing conformity of his times that "individual spontaneity is hardly recognized by the common modes of thinking as having any intrinsic worth, or deserving any regard on its own account. The majority, being satisfied with the ways of mankind as they now are . . . cannot comprehend why these ways should not be good enough for everybody." Mill's position undergoes a radical change and comes now to accept freedom, not as a means, but as "deserving regard on its own account"; for he is forced to admit that the general satisfaction is compatible with the absence of freedom, and that in this dilemma his prior commitment is to freedom. Mr. Goodman defends freedom as a means to an improved sexual ethic, but when he finds himself with a conflict of values, he sacrifices freedom to sexual reform.

Mr. Goodman's main contention is that when the court fixes the label "obscene" on material that stimulates sexual desire, it acts to corrupt that desire and to create the need for the debased pornography it suppresses. This contention seems to me to be valid and significant. But what does Mr. Goodman

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propose as an alternative? If his concern had been with freedom, he might have maintained that the First Amendment protects freedom of sexual expression as it protects freedom in political or religious communication, and that the proper limits in this area are set by precisely the same standards applicable to other areas of human conviction—whether the material in question constitutes a clear and present danger against crucial values that society has the right to protect by law. Instead, he argues for a redefinition of pornography with the clear implication that the "undesirable" variety be eliminated. "I have been arguing in this essay that not only is there innocent and useful pornography that ought not to be censored, but that the method of censorship helps create the very kind of harmful pornography that we should like to see checked." Mr. Goodman is not so much opposed to censorship as he is opposed to censorship of the wrong kind. He claims only the right that every opponent of free self-determination has claimed, the right to eliminate what is "harmful" and to defend what is "useful."

How is the good pornography distinguished from the bad? Not simply by the fact that it stimulates sexual desire, for Mr. Goodman defines the duty of the court "to call *not* obscene whatever tends to joy, love, and liveliness, including the stirring of lustful impulses and thoughts." But what precisely does the phrase "joy, love, and liveliness" mean? Mr. Goodman goes on to consider two aspects of the kind of pornography he would like to see eliminated—"its *mere* sexuality or 'lust,' devoid of any further human contact, drama, or meaning; and its very frequent sado-masochism."

As a paradigm case for "mere sexuality" he considers a man who engages in sexual intercourse in a state of complete emotional detachment, and suggests that the behavior is to be explained by the secret hatred borne by this man for himself in the presence of an act which he really finds degrading. But why should the act of pure sexual intercourse be degrading? Because such isolated sexuality is a "disowning of the sexuality of those we love" and as such constitutes a neurotic artifact which society has the right to censor. Let us overlook the problem of whether Mr. Goodman falls into his own trap and degrades the sexual impulse by branding its unalloyed manifestation as evil. Let us ask rather what is "lust in isolation"? Does such lust mean sexuality devoid of literally all other aspects of human experience —devoid of feelings of potency, human contact, and mutual acceptance? If this is what the phrase intends, it is not clear that any such thing could be experienced or understood by men. Something more than mere sexuality—no matter how rudimentary this something might be—is required among human beings in view of the fact that none of them is merely sexual. Mr. Goodman is forced to admit this much, for his explanation of the prior act of self-hate is that the individual regards his own mere sexuality as degrading. But this would be impossible if he were not engaged in more than the mere act of sexuality itself. But if mere sexuality is impossible, how much more is required to justify sexual experience? Is love required? I can imagine nothing more disastrous than arming the censor with this weapon. What is love? What degree of positive feeling between human beings justifies intercourse? Shall we require a test of love before we permit individuals the right of intercourse in this culture? If not, why shall we censor material that leads to such a state? Does "joy" justify intercourse? Literature is filled with examples of people joyously engaged in sexuality devoid of love. Should such literature be eliminated? Do Lady Chatterley and Mellors love each other? A strong case could be made that the relation between them is little but sexual involvement. Is their experience permeated by joy and life? The description of Constance's passion and orgasm—the wax melting before the flame—suggests that what she seeks is not human contact with Mellors or the source of life, but her own self-extinction. Shall we eliminate the book on these grounds? The Supreme Court has noted that the first requirement of due process by law is that a prohibition cannot be stated in language so ambiguous "that men of common intelligence must necessarily guess at its meaning."

Does the reference to sado-masochism—the identification of sexuality with punishment—fare any better? Mr. Goodman refers to the plays of Tennessee Williams as in-

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stances in this regard. Does he wish to censor such plays? What shall we do with a good part of the world's religious literature—St. Paul's views on sexual love, for example—that so equates sexuality with punishment and pain? Mr. Goodman never raises the crucial question of freedom—the right of men to interpretations of sexual experience opposed to his own. However much I believe Mr. Goodman's views of sex correct and Paul's incorrect, I believe more firmly that unless men are able to choose between these alternatives, powerfully expressed, they have no significant freedom in this area of their existence, and have to that extent surrendered the essential constituent of their full humanity.

CONTENDING THAT HE HAS differentiated the moral quality of various kinds of pornography, and can make a rating of "useful, indifferent, damaging," Mr. Goodman faces the question of how to improve the first and eliminate the second. In this regard he makes three suggestions so injurious to the democratic process that it is difficult to believe he is their author.

First, he dissents from the view of Judge Murtagh that such matters be left to a person's conscience by noting that it is "because moral problems are so publicly important that they must be ongoingly decided by the whole public." What shall we say of the convictions of political radicals, atheists, economic reactionaries, or philosophical skeptics? Since these are matters that touch the heart of the existing order shall they too be decided by the public as a whole? Shall not every matter of conviction and expression be determined by the public as a whole —which shall thereby be constituted as a national Star Chamber to eliminate whatever individual belief does not meet its conception of the public good? The First Amendment is infinitely wiser than Mr. Goodman on this point, for it recognizes that no social policy can ultimately further the public good if it grants to the public the authority to control the convictions of human beings.

Second, Mr. Goodman suggests that the courts recognize the stirring of sexual desire and "*somehow* strengthen[ed] the requirement of a provable social or human utility." The effect of such a suggestion is to reverse all the laborious work of the courts in regard to the notion of clear and present danger—a doctrine which holds that the burden of proof is on the opponent of freedom. Mr. Goodman's doctrine holds not that freedom is privileged, as the defendant in a capital crime is privileged until proved guilty, but that each instance of expression touching upon public concern is to be justified by its social utility. It is difficult to conceive of a more reactionary view in regard to free conviction. Who is to decide if a view is useful? By what criterion? Will deciding on the usefulness of a view require deciding on its truth? How is this to be decided? Why must a view be proved useful to be held at all? Aren't individuals freely entitled to their own confusions so long as they do not prevent others from holding convictions of their own? One feels again the hand of the social engineer—concerned to determine the public morality, but insufficiently appreciative of the prior requirement of *self*-determination.

The last suggestion is the most difficult to comprehend. For after holding that in principle anything regarding sexual experience might be exhibited, Mr. Goodman notes that "the aim is to establish a principled general policy. The states and localities could continue to enforce whatever censorship they please, so long as they do not risk a national suit and are content to do without some of the national culture." This suggestion is based on Mr. Goodman's prior analysis of "structured permissiveness" in regard to child rearing, a doctrine which approves of a firm structure of morals and the freedom to experiment. The difficulty with the analogy between child rearing and social rearing is that societies are not *children* to be reared by some pedagogical expert, but communities of *adults*, and that societies are not individual persons at all, but collections of persons. It is notable that Mr. Goodman does here what Plato does—he splits the functions of the individual into separate functions. The enlightened policy is assigned to the national culture, and the right to censor and to be much "more restrictive and self-defensive" is granted to local communities. But since men live in local communities, receive mail from local post offices, see movies at local theaters, and purchase books at local stores, the effect of Mr. Good-

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man's suggestion is to place the actual fabric of their lives under local control. Nor will the phrase about "national suits" protect us here, for if communities are really to be given local control, how could they possibly conflict with national culture at all? One feels that a hectic attempt is being made to save freedom after assuring its destruction.

The elimination of free sexual expression is doubly destructive. It corrupts the sexual impulse by branding it obscene, and it corrupts men by destroying their sexual responsibility. Mr. Goodman sees the first evil, but in not seeing the second he commits himself to a policy more injurious than the condition he wishes to destroy.

* * *

Mr. Goodman replies:

Mr. Lichtman raises a vital issue that I am glad to discuss. Unfortunately, I must first waste time in clearing up an extraordinary failure of communication between us. I am startled to find that I, a community anarchist who believes that coercive sovereign power is always a poor expedient, not only in cases of censorship but of police actions against any crimes, am read by Mr. Lichtman as asking for the coercive suppression of low-grade pornography, and of wanting to *enforce* sexual reform! Perhaps I take my libertarian position so much for granted that I fail to express it; perhaps Mr. Lichtman does not read closely. It is no matter. Let me make my position clear.

He says, "When Goodman finds himself with a conflict of values, he sacrifices freedom to sexual reform." First, in this area I find no such conflict, and I would even assume that there could not be one, since I am convinced that organism-self-regulation works out best. But second, *if* there were such a conflict, I should, with suffering, affirm *both* horns of the dilemma and try to bull it through, since both freedom and organic health are, to me, absolute goods. Mr. Lichtman further attributes to me the notion that "society has the right to censor" neurotic artifacts like loveless lust; or again, when I speak of the "harmful pornography" that we should like to see checked, he concludes that "Mr. Goodman is not so much opposed to censorship as he is opposed to censorship of the wrong kind." By this misreading I am baffled. Surely I make clear at sufficient length, including pages of future-thinking, that we must drop *all* censorship of pornography, to the inevitable extreme of Hollywood and Madison Avenue's cashing in on full sexual scenes; my hope being that this will soon diminish the pornographic atmosphere. Likewise, when I proceed to make a rough rating of useful, indifferent, and damaging pornography and say that "the social question is how to improve the first and eliminate the last," I immediately go on to say, "Police courts and administrative officers, however, and even jury courts and high courts, are hardly the right forum for important and subtle moral debates." Is this not clear? The paragraph ends with my ritual slam at J. Edgar Hoover, saying, "One of the few things that is demonstrable is that ignorant suppression is wrong"; and the burden of my entire argument has been that in this field *all* suppression is ignorant, has unthought-of effects. I say several times, "We must un-do repression."

I need not give other examples. We have here an extraordinary misreading not of occasional sentences but of whole trains of argument. The question then is: How can a liberal reader, not malicious, and importantly in agreement with me, so misread my argument? This brings me to the vital issue that is interesting to discuss. What, these days, does it mean to be "liberal"?

Mr. Lichtman asks what I mean by freedom and what is my justification for the freedom I mean to defend. In my opinion, we must understand freedom in a very positive sense: it is *the condition of initiating activity.* Apart from this pregnant meaning, mere freedom from interference is both trivial and *in fact cannot be substantially protected.* For even while persons feel themselves inviolate in their bodies, their rights, their families, etc., they are effectually hemmed in, imposed on, and their resources for action pre-empted. Soon, formally free, they are powerless and enslaved. (In my opinion we are hastening rapidly into an American fascism-of-the-majority of just

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this kind; a couple of bad reverses and the brutality of it will appear.) The justification for freedom is that initiation is essential for *any* high-grade human behavior. Only free action has grace and force. Certainly there is a difference between a juridical person with "freedom under law" and a child with freedom to grow in a structure of parental morals and culture; but I do not think that Mr. Lichtman understands that there is a difference between a juridical person and a *man,* growing in his community and in history. Our rights as juridical persons, that make society our own as citizens and give us dignity, must be continually fought for by free growing and initiation; otherwise they are empty. This is why some of us are anarchists; we do not put our faith in princes and constitutions. As anarchists, we affirm the Bill of Rights because it is one of *our* historical achievements, basic to proceeding further. *By* proceeding to further initiation —including free sexual expression—we shall also defend the Bill of Rights. *Unless* we proceed further, we shall degenerate to mere "society," a collection of persons without the community of human beings.

Let us consider the history. I submit that in the heroic age of the liberal philosophy, gradually extending over religion, science, economics, and politics, from the 16th through the 18th centuries, liberals were saying pretty much what I have been saying. Freedom meant freedom to enterprise, to bear witness, to initiate and govern. It was not for self-protection that liberal rights were wrested from church and crown, but to achieve something. By the time we come to Mill in the middle of the 19th century, "liberal" thought has begun to sour a good deal. Consider the clause, "The majority, being satisfied with the ways of mankind as they now are. . . ." It is just this that liberals of the great age would resolutely have refused; the majority would have to learn to be dissatisfied and move. Is it mysterious what has occurred? The bourgeois carriers of freedom, who had once found freedom utilitarian, now no longer were finding it utilitarian; they were not hankering for fundamental changes. Mill clings to the great tradition, but with a genteel pessimism.

By the time we come to Mr. Lichtman, however, the "liberal" tradition has undergone a catastrophe. For now we are in the age of organized affluence, of automatic technology, feudal monopoly, and symbolic democracy; and the universally prevalent ideology is that Nothing Can Be Done. Therefore, naturally, "freedom" no longer has anything to do with ongoing initiation; it has become the protection of cowering individuals. Such freedom leads to fascism.

I fear that this is why Mr. Lichtman misreads me. When I make the simple remark that certain sexual behavior is neurotic or base, that certain literature stinks, and that —by the relevant processes of medicine, education, and wise policy and leadership—we obviously ought to cure it or eliminate it, he at once construes this to mean that people are to be compelled! The thought that the quality of life is improvable, which was the dogma of liberalism, is now felt by the cowering individual as a threat of tyranny! And perhaps strangest of all, when I propose that the best way of diminishing undesirable pornography is to do nothing about it, this is called social engineering! That is why, since the 19th century, some of us liberals have chosen to call ourselves anarchists.

LET ME COME, THEN, to my three dreadful suggestions "so injurious to the democratic process" that it is difficult to believe I am their author.

First, I point out that sexual morals are not private. Would Mr. Lichtman seriously deny this, when family, courting, friendship, education, and culture are essentially involved? Neither are they matters for police and laws. But they are, I say, the concern of "the manifold mind of all the institutions of society, skirmishing and experimenting, to figure them out and invent right solutions." In this context, I include the high court as a body of the learned, the nearest we come to a committee of the Lords. This interaction of institutions, often conflictful, but aiming at agreement and not power, is what I mean by community; and anyone who knows my work will recognize this application as typical. Certainly it is not democratic, if by democratic is meant counting noses. The essence of modern liberalism is that it polarizes the powerful state and the "protected" individual. The essence of our community philosophy is that it tries in every way to strengthen every kind of humanly manageable institution and association in

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between, so that problems can be conflictfully worked out. Another correspondent, Mr. Friedell ["Letters to the Editor," July], objected to me here that "institutions are merely tools of society." Not at all. Institutions comprise society; it is they that carry the indefinitely complex meanings that no individual can know by himself; but every man acts in numerous institutions. I fail to see how this is giving "the public the authority to control convictions," except insofar as any institution can, for its own purposes, exclude and boycott you. Get together your own group.

Mr. Lichtman's second complaint is better made, for my own language is erroneous and allows the implication that I ask the court to decide in *general* on provable social utility. I agree that this would be disastrous. But my vague sentence was explicitly aimed at the TV networks—"as would be a reasonable requirement for TV stations, for instance, since they use the public channels." My thought is that they ought to prove a public service for the public franchise. This is a matter of licensing, not censorship. Whenever anything pre-empts resources or forces itself on attention, like a billboard, it ought to prove utility. Any other policy denies freedom to everybody else.

My third tyrannical proposal is for local option to censor or not as it pleases, so long as there is a national policy of free culture and encouragement of the sexual revolution. My critic finds my aim hard to understand. Let me make several points. (1) For me, almost always the principle of decentralized power is overriding and should be fostered. My reasoning is simply de Tocqueville's: "A democracy without provincial institutions has no security against the excesses of despotism. How can a populace unaccustomed to freedom in small concerns learn to use it temperately in great affairs?" (2) At present, however, I have no doubt that a vast majority of the population is prejudiced, whether we think of the readers of the New York *Daily News* or of the usually appalling small-town press. And indeed, my guess is that the influence of Kennedy and family will be to strengthen this FBI mentality. But there is hope that the high courts might make wiser choices that provide the possibility of humane culture; this is why I ask for a "principled general policy." I have no objection to analogizing this to my "structured permissiveness for children," since that is indeed the situation. Frankly, as an intellectual I think the best safeguard is still to be able to go elsewhere, and local option increases the chances of this. (3) Finally, I am after very far-reaching changes; they are revolutionary. Yet such can occur, prudently and lastingly, only by changes in people in their localities. So the brake and the buffer of local option seem to me excellent, however trying, so long as there is a general drift in the right direction.

IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES

Martin Buber's Hasidism	GERSHOM SCHOLEM
Morals, Metaphysics & American Foreign Policy	ROBERT A. NISBET
English Poetry Today	A. ALVAREZ
Negro Militancy & the Unions	TOM BROOKS
The Two Israels	ALEX WEINGROD
Humanism & Aid to Underdeveloped Countries	E. F. SCHUMACHER

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Plastic Men

To the Editor of Commentary:

Re your symposium [April]:

Orthodoxies

Jews
who
go to
no
synagogue
have
faces
which
change
all
the time.

Norman Mailer

New York City

Intelligence and Peace

To the Editor of Commentary:

Nathan Glazer's article, "The Peace Movement in America—1961" [April], seems to me to be, on the whole, a valuable and perceptive analysis. Two points, however, may warrant comment.

First, Mr. Glazer's repeated use of the term "woolly-minded" in connection with the United World Federalists is in the worst possible taste and detracts from the overall competence of his article.

His first reference is borderline. ("They have, in fact, been considered—though with less than perfect justification—woolly-minded.") But the second reference removes the attribution. ("SANE in general now seems to be overcoming the tradition of woolly-mindedness it inherited from the world federalist and pacifist background of its founders. . . .")

I happen not to be a pacifist, but I would seriously question the judgment of anyone who used such a lazy stereotype as applied to that group.

As a world federalist, however, I can enter the most strenuous objection to Mr. Glazer's characterization of UWF, especially in the context of his remark that it lacks standing among people of substance. Even the most casual research would have indicated that the idea of world federalism or world law has engaged the attention of serious scholars in many countries. The Commission to Study the Organization of the Peace appointed a special study group under Professor Arthur N. Holcombe, himself a world federalist, to consider the strengthening of the United Nations. The report of that committee supported many of the principal tenets of federalists. The late Albert Einstein referred to world federalism as the most important political idea in the contemporary world. Few studies concerned with the organization of the peace have been more thoroughly researched or soundly based than *World Peace Through World Law*, by Grenville Clark and Louis B. Sohn, published by the Harvard University Press. This book, written by federalists, has been given the most serious attention by students of political science and international relations. The present Secretary of State was a major speaker at the American convention of world federalists several years ago. Winston Churchill has raised the question of world government as a reasonable alternative to world war. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas has only recently defined the challenge of world federalism. The American Bar Association has made world law (not synonymous with world federalism but closely related to it) a prime subject for consideration by its members. At least twenty members of the Senate at various times have introduced or supported measures with world federalist connotations. The late Senator Robert A. Taft, generally regarded as rather hard-headed, was most responsive to the federalist argument, as his book indicated. In fact, his campaign manager, Mr. Paul Walter, is now First Vice President of the United World Federalists, Inc.

As I say, Mr. Glazer's offhand and totally unjust characterization of the federalists detracts from the general excellence of his article.

Now we come to the second point.

Mr. Glazer's article is largely concerned with the National Committee for A Sane Nuclear Policy. In it he makes reference to the positions of the co-chairmen and to the organization in general. I should sup-

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pose that any reasonable attempt to do research for such an article would have included a session or two with either or both the co-chairmen. This Mr. Glazer failed to do. If he had, I know I might have been able to give him factual material on some matters which he handles on a somewhat speculative basis.

I trust that neither of these two points will be regarded as a quibble. There is no question in my mind concerning Mr. Glazer's good faith, and, as I say, much in the article is valuable, fair, and perceptive.

NORMAN COUSINS
Editor

Saturday Review
New York City

Mr. Glazer *writes*:

I am sure my references to world federalism in the article were too brief to be clear. Almost everyone—as indicated by the names of those who have supported it—agrees that a world authority, armed with accepted world law and physical force, is the ideal solution to the problems raised by the existence of sovereign nation-states armed with deadly weapons. It is much more difficult—as is also indicated by the range of names in Mr. Cousins's letter—to see how we may advance to this goal. Thus people of the most diverse political views may (and do) support the goal of world federalism without its affecting, in hardly any way, what they do on immediate issues e.g., whether to arm NATO with nuclear weapons or to continue atomic test-ban negotiations at Geneva, etc. My point was that insofar as these very general goals of world federalism or pacifism affected the style and substance of SANE's activities, and more significantly, the public image of SANE, they limited its potential impact on those who felt strongly about the immediate issues of testing or atomic-weapons control, but who did not see the relevance of either world federalism or pacifism to these critical issues. I believe, as I said in the article, that in recent months SANE's public statements have dealt directly, professionally, and competently with issues that relate to the threat of thermonuclear war.

I am sorry I did not discuss the article with Mr. Cousins. I did interview Homer Jack, the executive secretary of SANE, and spoke to others who were intimately involved in its activities, and believe that I understood the matters about which I wrote. Had I not been limited by time, I would have also tried to interview Mr. Cousins.

The Range of Jewish Writers

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I should like to object strongly to Mr. Benjamin DeMott's exercise in baffletalk, "Jewish Writers in America: A Place in the Establishment," in your February issue. According to him, the tone of Jewish fiction seems "to imply that the role of the masterful man aloft in the world of ideas, the stance of positive control, is actually one that no Jew could ever bring off with total success, without winking reductively at himself in the process." Later he says, "In most of his work the Jewish fictionist in America seems strongly to respond [to the idea that] the key situation of life is one of personal humiliation and the dominant emotion of human experience is one of self-pity."

A few exceptions to DeMott's first quoted statement: Al Manheim in Budd Schulberg's *What Makes Sammy Run?,* Morris Seidman in Elick Moll's *Seidman & Son,* Augie March in Saul Bellow's *The Adventures of Augie March,* Shimon Susskind in Bernard Malamud's "The Last Mohican," Werner Samuelson in Philip Roth's "The Contest for Aaron Gold," Eli Peck in Roth's "Eli, the Fanatic," Solomon the supply sergeant in Leo Litwak's "The Solitary Life of Man," and the existentialist professor-narrator in Yoram Kaniuk's *The Acrophile.* Without a reductive winking at the self, each of these individuals vindicates his own existence at personal cost; one or two are even quite believable heroes (Litwak's Solomon, for example).

As for DeMott's second statement, the "key situation" so often encountered in American Jewish fiction is actually the aftermath to the humiliation and self-pity that he stresses. The individual strives toward a goal, falls on his face or is kicked from behind, but ultimately he asserts himself and thereby redeems himself. The Bar Mitzvah initiation, the coming into manhood, is simply pushed forward a number of years beyond the thirteenth birthday. Examples of this triumphant coming of age? Leo Litwak's "The Making of a Clerk," Herbert Gold's "Aristotle and the Hired Thugs," Irwin Shaw's "Noah Ackerman" section of *The Young Lions,* Sam Astrachan's *An End to Dying,* and many of the stories I've mentioned earlier. To overlook entirely, as DeMott seems to do, the clarion call to endure, to survive, to prevail—in American Jewish literature—is indeed to be in a position to misread it as a series of sob stories and whining complaints. . . .

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Perhaps DeMott is most vague and misleading when he deals with the matter of increasing one's degree of assimilation and broadening one's too-Jewishly-limited horizons. He says, in effect, the Jewish novelist's only considerable advantage as a writer (as the non-Jew sees him) is that he may be believed to be a comprehensive man. No matter how assimilated the age, one associates with him impersonality and detachment from private circumstance as a difficult achievement involving some serious inner struggle and genuine victory over private pain. Well! If the Jewish writer is genuinely assimilated (Simone Weil?), what Jewish turn of mind or what advantage as a writer does he or she have? . . . Moreover, in the face of assimilation for the Jewish writer, of what possible meaning for anyone are such ideas as impersonality and detachment from private circumstance through inner struggle and victory over private pain?

The whole point is that there does exist in American Jewish fiction a significant range of tones beyond the humiliation-and-self-pity tone, even beyond such related tones as self-hatred-and-rebellion and triumph-through-adversity. A few of these tones? Self-purification through a kind of sanctified partnership (Montague Glass, Moll, Malamud, P. Roth); the picaresque soul journey (Abraham Cahan, Henry Roth, Bellow, Malamud); an alchemical dialectic in which the Jewish group is transmuted through alembics of love, hate, reverence, and contempt (Glass, Cahan, Myron Kaufmann, H. Gold, P. Roth); a transcendent irony toward the Jewish group, rendering pointless any vested-interest value judgment (Fiedler, Litwak, P. Roth, Kaniuk); a transcending of personal experience itself, through expressionistic obliquities (H. Roth, Kaniuk, Delmore Schwartz, Fiedler). . . .

In summation, a resounding No! in thunder to DeMott's blind-maze jargon about the Jewish fictionist's failure to reach beyond the self.

SAMUEL I. BELLMAN

Pomona, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

There is something touching about Benjamin DeMott's vision of the critic, aloof and masterful, concerned with art and excellence, while writers drag him back to the kitchen and the grocery. He ignores, however, problems that may be more important to the Jewish writer than the embarrassment of critics caught in a literary world devoid of grace and elegance. His honesty in stating his weariness with the preoccupation with weakness and humiliation found in Jewish writing might profitably be matched by an effort to see whether it is precisely the quality which is "Jewish" that is antagonistic to art—and consequently to the critic sitting in judgment and looking for the command and control that can neither be imposed from without nor willed from within. . . .

The writer who has roots in Jewish as well as American culture may suspect, to some degree, that grace and elegance are snares; that beauty, morality, and truth are inextricably bound to each other. He may have inherited the notion that landscape is unimportant; that the word is "holy" and not to be used frivolously; or that the poet has some obligation to improve the world. . . .

At this moment, however, many Jewish writers, like other Jews, carry in themselves only echoes and vestiges of Jewish feeling and understanding. Their attachment to these vestiges may . . . make it possible for them to challenge the traditional views of American reality with the belligerent and embarrassing truths of Brownsville and Chicago and may even influence the more "impersonal" revelations of Lionel Trilling, Paul Goodman, Leslie Fiedler, and others who have earned their eminent reputations outside of Jewish life. . . . Benjamin DeMott may see this impersonality as evidence of control and self-command, but it may also be seen as a way of evading and repudiating the problems of Jewish consciousness.

The control and command of a writer such as Bashevis Singer is completely different. In many ways it is closer to that of the classical Yiddishists than to any modern writers. His ability to write without humiliation of human frailty, depravity, foolishness, and superstition, may have some connection to the fact that he grew up in a world in which Jews felt superior to non-Jews—in their capacity for compassion, in their horror of inhumanity, and in their hatred of violence. Peretz, Mendele, and Sholom Aleichem, who preceded Singer, wrote with conviction that the mature man, the complete man, was inevitably a Jew. Not only could he not be a cossack, he couldn't even wish to be one. Out of this certainty came much of the self-command that Mr. DeMott admires in "Gimpel the Fool." By comparison, the stories of Malamud, or Roth, *are* expressions of guilt and uneasiness. It is as if the writers were hovering over their subjects, like the shreds of Peretz's Kolboynik, victims of their inability to know who they are and where they belong. The traditional compas-

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sion has curdled into self-pity; the horror at inhumanity has narrowed into private humiliation; and the hatred for violence has become the fear of cowardice. . . .

There is no longer an opportunity to explore Jewish values as a source of understanding and vitality. These values can be observed only as they linger, marrano-like, distorted. Increasingly, Jewish life is American life. "Goodbye, Columbus" could have been written without Jewish characters and not lost its point. Even a story such as "The Conversion of the Jews" is more an example of uncertainty than of anything else. Benjamin DeMott finds in it the assumption that "all Jews are vicious in defense of their religion." What is more curious, however, is that Philip Roth has twisted the historical fact. Who has been hit because of God? Such distortions occur when pieties are worn, and one is eager for something new and startling.

Benjamin DeMott urges writers to free themselves of old material and attitudes. Their contribution, as Jewish writers, however, will have no significance unless they can, at the same time, repair their connections to the past. If lack of interest or amnesia continues to keep young writers unaware of the Jewish life that existed before Hitler and Israel, there will be no point in understanding why there were writers with command over themselves and their subjects during periods of real humiliation, and why there are now so few of them when Jews are prosperous and powerful in so many areas of American life.

SYLVIA ROTHCHILD

Sharon, Massachusetts

MR. DEMOTT *writes:*

People who in 1961 regard an objective and impersonal Jew as a figure of special courage are doubtless generalizing some experience of their own with anti-Semitism in an improper fashion; there are many roads to impersonality, and it is a mistake to assume that anyone who arrives must have had extraordinary encounters with stupidity on the way. The mistake is common, though, partly because of awareness that anti-Semitism has not yet disappeared, partly because meetings are not infrequent with men and women whose lives are known to have been scarred by the anti-Semitism of the past. I allowed in my piece for the possibility that belief in the Jew as a comprehensive man is sentimental or superstitious, but I admit to an uneasy sympathy with the belief. Prejudice against men who are sorry for themselves without apparent cause is normal; a disposition to admire men who are not sorry for themselves, even though ground for such feeling can readily be imagined, is also normal; and on balance the latter disposition —even if it has about it hints of unconscious condescension—is not as cruel as obliviousness. Whether simple or complicated, these are awkward matters for expression, at least for a commentator inexperienced in moral analysis; I understood that it would be difficult to make my language or my jargon, as Mr. Bellman calls it, adequate to them, but I did not seek to fail. The problem was: how to acknowledge the existence of an audience that gives instantaneous respect to Jewish writers who turn outward from themselves, without suggesting that the gift is of absolutely unambiguous value?

As for Mr. Bellman's lists, only fatuity would address itself in a letter to all the items on them. I can say in fatuous shorthand that I share his enthusiasm for the work of Leo Litwak, about which I've written briefly elsewhere (*Hudson Review,* Spring 1960), but that to my knowledge there is not enough of it in print to support a critical argument; that I do not agree that the best of Shaw and Schulberg lies outside the classifications I offered, and that their worst is too insubstantial to count in the case at hand; that I admit that the language I used in describing *The Victim* and *Seize the Day* is not adequate for *Augie March;* and, finally, that Mr. Bellman's readings of the stories of Malamud and Roth that he mentions are indefensibly tendentious. (The registering consciousness in "The Last Mohican," for example, is not Shimon Susskind but Fidelman, the student; the story is not about the way in which Susskind "vindicates his own existence at personal cost," but about the way in which Fidelman, the American Jew, is brought to a less abstract understanding of the humiliations suffered by American Jews.) These snippets of unexplained judgment constitute no impressive counterattack, as is obvious; nothing could persuade Mr. Bellman to a favorable view of my characterization of recent Jewish fiction except a defense of the view in specific relation to the works he cites. But that this enterprise can't be conducted under the present circumstances does not mean that it could not be conducted; neither does it mean that in making my original case I urged that the case had complete validity. I described, for a purpose I reassert below, an impression; Mr. Bellman's account of his impression is valuable, but it does not quite cancel mine.

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Nor would it perhaps cancel that of Sylvia Rothchild, who argues that contemporary Jewish fiction is marked by "self-pity," "private humiliation," and "fear of cowardice," and advances an explanation for their presence that differs from mine, namely that American Jews have lost touch with the Jewish life that existed before Hitler and Israel. She holds that if the writers in question could connect themselves with traditions that find expression in Bashevis Singer, Peretz, and Sholom Aleichem, they might again speak strongly. The point is interesting, but no more so than indications (see the recent COMMENTARY symposium on "Jewishness and the Younger Intellectuals") that the possibility of establishing such connections is, for the new generation, almost nonexistent. Keening for the values of the old culture brought here by immigrant Jews is understandable; but there are American resources which if recovered would provide alternatives of a kind to what has been lost. If the gates of the local past are rusty, they nevertheless swing wide on beings of invigorating idealistic force, Emerson for one, and upon actions that, when brought alive in the imagination, are enough in themselves to put shoulders on writers and blades in brains. Are these beings impossible to reach? The self-control and self-command of Jewish critics and social observers (described by Sylvia Rothchild as men who are "evading and repudiating the problems of Jewish consciousness") are easy to read as signs of a determination to find a way through the muck of the present to the rich radical vein of the American past. And it is partly for that reason that I think of the "repudiation" as admirable, and regard the outward-reaching books that issue from it—Goodman's *Growing Up Absurd* is the latest—as works with a piece to speak to imaginative writers.

I may add that the subject of my article was more limited than the foregoing letters and this generalizing answer imply. I addressed myself to the tone taken by Jewish critics toward Jewish writers, and explained its bearings as I understood them. My purpose was to suggest that embarrassment about or condescension toward the successes of recent Jewish fictionists is no substitute for assessment, and that avoidance of assessment does no service to the writers and encourages disrespect for the men who comment on their work. I do not claim that my explanation of the evasiveness was richly informed or at all points sound; I do claim merit for the assertion that more rigorous critical self-scrutiny is a serious need.

Labor and the Public Good

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his article on "The New Administration and Labor" [March], Mr. Tom Brooks has been terribly unfair and untrue in his comments on the United Auto Workers and Walter Reuther. He talks about the "John L. Lewis turn"—namely, cooperating with industry for a smaller but higher paid work force—and says this turn has already been signalled by the UAW. As proof, he writes: "The United Auto Workers, for example, two years ago granted a virtual veto power over contracts to its skilled trades department, a move that makes very little sense unless one assumes that that department is in future to become the major force within the union." He talks about the giant unions working out a "quid pro quo" with their industrial counterparts to justify price increases in return for collective bargaining gains. . . .

Now, just where has Mr. Brooks been all these years, and what labor movement was he covering as the assistant labor editor of *Business Week*? . . . Does he really believe that the industrial giants of America stop to ask permission of the unions with whom they deal whether or not to lay off workers? Or seek approval before they install automated machinery or establish a new method of production? Mr. Brooks refers to featherbedding. . . . I challenge him to walk down an auto, truck, or tractor assembly line anywhere in this country and point out excess workers!

As for the UAW's role in collective bargaining and its impact on America, again I ask, where has Brooks been? . . . We struck General Motors for 118 days in 1946–47 because we said they could afford a wage increase without a price increase, and challenged them to open their books to disprove it. In our last negotiations with GM, we said they could grant every single demand of our union, lower the price of every automobile by $100, and still make a greater return on net worth than the average for industry as a whole. . . . Collusion indeed.

Mr. Brooks complains that pensions, supplemental unemployment benefits insurance, medical care, and hospitalization should have been won on the political and not the collective bargaining front. . . . It was not for lack of trying by the UAW that these things were not accomplished as a right for all Americans through legislation. But even here our collective bargaining gains had a salutary impact. . . . When we first nego-

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tiated our non-contributory funded pension plans, we tied them in with social security so that the employers had to pay the difference between what the government paid and $100 a month. Now, the corporations not only had opposed the idea of social security, they fought any increase in old-age benefits after the system was established. But before the ink was dry on the contracts which established our first pensions, these same corporations fell all over themselves pressuring Congress to raise social security benefits, and were successful! Was this "collective bargaining collusion at the expense of the rest of the nation"? . . .

Now it is simply untrue that the UAW granted the skilled trades department veto power over contracts. Our skilled trades people are in a minority in a large industrial union with problems peculiar to themselves. As a basic democratic right, our convention amended our constitution to give to skilled tradesmen, and to clerical and technical people, the right to elect their own representatives in the collective bargaining processes—both locally and nationally—and to ratify or reject only that portion of a contract exclusively pertaining to them. Their action in no way affects the normal constitutional procedures for the other million and a quarter members in ratifying their own contracts. . . .

SEYMOUR KAHAN
International Representative
UAW Harvester Department
Chicago, Illinois

MR. BROOKS *writes:*

Obviously, Mr. Kahan and I have hold of different parts of the elephant. I suspect he overestimates the amount of corporate support for increases in social security pension benefits and in unemployment compensation. Also, it hasn't come to my attention that any UAW strike has resulted in a cut in auto prices. In spite of Walter Reuther's efforts back in 1947 to get the companies to open their books, the auto companies have been setting prices pretty much as they please.

The collective bargaining waltz of the post-World War II era is, perhaps, with deference to Mr. Kahan's union, best illustrated by the steel negotiations in which each time around the union would compile a book-length indictment of steel pricing before bargaining and conveniently forget that indictment after the bargain was struck.

One point I tried to make was that the companies have changed the rules of the game. Unhappily, the unions aren't meeting the new situation with the flair of imagination they showed in the late 40's and early 50's. If collective bargaining is going to have any guts in the decade ahead, unions and management ought to thrash out the question of who owns the job, as well as the terms under which the workers through their unions would give permission for the installation of new machinery or the establishment of new methods of production.

I suspect that the UAW's equivocal attitude toward the shorter work week—it was dropped as a demand during the last negotiations and apparently will not be one this time—speaks more about the John L. Lewis turn than anything I could say.

As to Mr. Kahan's last point, I suggest that he—and any interested reader—read the debate that took place at the UAW's 1957 convention (pp. 272 to 303 of the proceedings) over the constitutional amendment that gives the skilled trades the right to take separate economic action apart from the rest of the union.

Survival in the Diaspora

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As one who has participated in the task of assisting Jewish immigration in recent years, I feel duty-bound to record my puzzlement that none of the three commentators on "Ben Gurion Against the Diaspora" [Oscar Handlin, Milton Himmelfarb, Charles E. Shulman; March] expressed concern with the issue of whether there can be hope of Jewish survival *anywhere* if Western democracies were to perish.

This lack—of identifying Jewish survival with democratic survival—was particularly evident in Mr. Himmelfarb's pessimism about the fate of Jewish communities in Latin America. His thesis that the new nationalistic type of revolution tends to "squeeze out the Jews" is probably correct, but to assume that this type of revolution will inevitably sweep Latin America is certainly subject to some question, as is his flat "prediction of Jewish emigration from Latin America in the years ahead." Mr. Himmelfarb himself doubts that such prospective emigration would be in the direction of Israel. The erosion of freedom in Latin America and the consequent weakening of pro-U. S. forces are certainly very real dangers, but do they not emphasize the fact that the fate of Jews living in Western democracies is far more closely tied to the preservation and strengthening of demo-

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cratic forces than it is to any argument about Jewish emigration from the United States to Israel? . . .

Finally, may I respectfully point out a serious error in Mr. Himmelfarb's statement that practically no Jews from the original group of some 2,200 (not 2,500) in the Belgian Congo are now left. . . . A substantial number of Jews did leave the Congo in the summer and fall of 1960, some for repatriation to Belgium, others for very limited emigration to Israel, and a last group for an even more limited emigration to Western countries. Several hundred more fled to nearby African countries, but a great majority of these have since returned to the Congo. Therefore, according to the best available information as of this writing, close to two-thirds of the original community are still residing in the Congo. The whys and wherefores of this persistent attachment to a country suffering such complete convulsions and chaos is a phenomenon which might well be worth studying. However, it cannot be used—as yet—as an example of an entire Jewish community leaving an area which has undergone drastic political and economic changes.

JAMES P. RICE

New York City

Criticizing Movies

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The issue is plain: either Wallace Markfield, whose "observations" on my book, *The Three Faces of the Film,* appear in your March number ["By the Light of the Silvery Screen"], is indulging in mental debauchery or I am—and with me, men such as Eric Bentley and Stanley Edgar Hyman, who have found my analysis of Hollywood films perfectly sober as well as very relevant and valuable, and John Crowe Ransom and Allen Tate, who, as editors, have printed work by me of the sort termed by Mr. Markfield in his article, "the wildest and weirdest observations you're likely to encounter this side of a mescaline trance." Mr. Markfield also avers that Paul Goodman's statement—"Parker Tyler reacting to a Hollywood movie is a better movie than they ever dreamed of there."—may be rendered alternately as "For Parker Tyler, a movie is only the goad that sends him into a frenzy of free associations; the real drama is taking place in his unconscious." One might imagine a great deal, associatively or dissociatively, about a thought where a period has been made to replace a semi-colon. Mr. Goodman's thought, as it reads on my book's jacket (from which Mr. Markfield got it), contains an additional clause after the semi-colon which Mr. Markfield removed: "it is almost cinema art." Clearly, the sense of Mr. Goodman's thought is that I have found ways of advancing the art of Hollywood. As this, however, was inconsistent with Mr. Markfield's subjective feelings, the climactic clause vanished. Since Mr. Markfield charges that I push film criticism to the verge of drug-taking, I feel that I ought to emphasize further that his hallucinations are far more demonstrable than mine.

Commenting on my "three basic approaches" (actually his own fictions), Mr. Markfield begins with "the juxtaposition of things that don't belong together," and lists some novels, authors, and films as being mentioned on a single page of mine; the implication is that, for some fantastic reason, he considers they do not "belong together" there. Self-evidently, there are many *more* ways of grouping some of them than I had in mind; in any case, the systematically serial way I do group them could be conveyed to your readers in a sentence. My way, I might add, was considered perfectly plausible by one of the "squarest" academic quarterlies in the U. S.

As to those "laws and propositions" imputed to me by Mr. Markfield, he presumes that my edited sentence, "To get more people into the theaters . . . the movies have been overreaching stage and novel to call upon the dynamic sensations of kinesthesia through the third-dimension effect and the illusion of being surrounded by the area of vision," can be, as he says, "roughly translated" into "screens are getting bigger all the time." Even a bright high-school student (in his right mind) should be able to see that Mr. Markfield's translation is not even "roughly" accurate, even if meant as Basic English, for some very big screens show films without the 3-D effect and are not curved enough to seem to surround the viewer.

As an example of my "celebration of the chi-chi and brushing-off of the conventional," Mr. Markfield specifies of my book: "You can hunt high and low before you'll find a kind word for anything that's come out of Hollywood since *Greed* and *Broken Blossoms.*" This ambiguity is typical of the glib guff that flows from Mr. Markfield's typewriter. Does he mean, by the "before," that your hunt will or will not be successful? The odd thing about his remark is that *in the same sentence* in which I praise *Greed,*

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and for exactly the same given reason, I praise *The Red Badge of Courage,* a Hollywood film that came long after *Greed.* See page 60 of my book. One may have to "hunt," according to Freud, just when one has decided, unconsciously, to be blind. Besides, there are several other recent Hollywood films for which I have a kind word in passing.

In case all the above illustrations of Mr. Markfield's rash carelessness in attempting to discredit my book through direct quotation do not quite convince you of his incompetence as an "observer," let me add two more instances: (1) he alleges that in my "celebration of the chi-chi" I "drip dithyrambs" about Maya Deren's films; amid the evidence he quotes, possibly the most extravagant phrase is "transmuted into glory"; it happens, however, that this phrase was not written about Miss Deren's work, but referred, in a foregoing paragraph, to the theme of Cocteau's *Blood of a Poet.* (2) The other phrases he quotes in this connection are indeed about Miss Deren's work, yet owing to a typesetter's error or to Mr. Markfield's remarkably bad mental aim, my term, "changeable environment," in one quotation has become "unchanging environment"; my protest in this instance may seem excessive, but the inversion does deprive my original statement of its sense.

PARKER TYLER

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Wallace Markfield's observation that the "intellectual who turns to film criticism is letting himself in for a rough time" is a truism that cannot be challenged—especially in the light of Mr. Markfield's flickering illuminations. Here are two "intellectuals" who tried it, and they will not escape Mr. Markfield, by Howard Hawks!

As to finding a language for film criticism (or criticism of books dealing with films), Mr. Markfield seems to have precious little trouble: he adopts either the patented, wise-guy prose of urbane Grade B-minus movies ("Again, nothing sensational here; a mild uh huh and you plod ahead") or *Time*-ish-Magazine-ish epiphanies ("And once through the thicket, where ends the path?"). Uh huh. Sometimes he ranges away from these with words and phrases such as *"aperçu,"* "dithyramb," and "forest of abstraction" which he really should be saving for a review of *The Wasteland.* . . .

Mr. Markfield also seems to be greatly involved in the costs of films. I cannot disagree that an air battle through a loud speaker is hack, gimmicky, and cheap, but to venture forth and opine that "economics divulge as much as aesthetics" in *Bicycle Thief, La Strada,* and *Cabiria* is to reveal the soul of a Marxist accountant. If elaborate Italian street sets were built (say in Wyoming) and half the population of Rome (a cast of millions!) were flown over to populate them—would that satisfy Mr. Markfield? I doubt it. He'd find some reason to knock it—most likely a paucity of coins in the Fountain of Trevi.

JAY WENK

New York City

MR. MARKFIELD *writes:*

What passes through Mr. Tyler's mind as he reacts to the screen is undoubtedly fascinating stuff. To claim, however, that these reactions make for "a better movie than they ever dreamed of there" strikes me as a dangerous form of solipsism, which Webster defines as "the theory, assumption, or belief that the self can know nothing but its own modifications and states." Moreover, if the oddly personal uses to which Mr. Tyler puts movies represent a way of "advancing the art of Hollywood," I can say only that with such a friend Hollywood doesn't need an enemy.

I bow to that "squarest" of academic quarterlies which found Mr. Tyler's grouping of "novels, authors, and films . . . on a single page . . . perfectly plausible." That after close reading and deep thinking I fail to see wherein Mr. Tyler has linked Zola and Flaubert to Tolstoy, Arnold Bennett and Jules Romains to Flaherty, and *The House on 92nd Street* and *13 Rue Madeleine* to *It Happened on Fifth Avenue* and *Miracle on 34th Street* is unimportant. What is important is that Mr. Tyler makes wholesale raids upon literature—and upon most other arts as well—for concepts and standards, which, when applied to movies are not only inappropriate, but downright silly. Sometimes, too, he will drag in myth, magic, and ritual to enhance points as difficult to grasp as a basketball. My favorite, which I take pains to quote in its entirety, reads: "The great popularity of Valentino's best-known film, *The Sheik,* was owing to the anachronistic glamor of the Sheik's erotic technique; he kidnaps a beautiful woman and compels her to fall in love with him. The essential primitiveness of this technique recalls those elements of ancient ritual in which a bride was won by feats of physical or mental daring or lost by failing in such

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feats. It is also to be illustrated by a popular version of the legend of 'caveman love': the figure of Tarzan, whose adventures still survive on our movie screens. As film fare, of course, the Tarzan stories are correctly considered low-grade, and yet Tarzan is fundamentally a romantic hero who defies rules in gaining his bride."

I sincerely apologize for assigning the phrase "transmuted into glory" to Maya Deren. That it was intended for Cocteau's *Blood of a Poet* doesn't make it any less a "celebration of the chi-chi." The error in transcription which converted "changeable" to "unchanging" *does* alter Mr. Tyler's meaning, and is inexcusable.

As for Mr. Wenk, I don't know quite how seriously he wants to be taken or precisely what he's objecting to. If he means to put me down by coupling my name with Howard Hawks, I can only say that I consider Hawks a movie-maker of the highest order. To his criticism of my prose I reply with a fervent uh huh and a promise to try to do better-ish some future-ish time.

Carrying the sounds of an air battle through a loud speaker is not in itself necessarily "hack, gimmicky, and cheap," nor did I say so. I said, rather, that it's been done to death, and long, long before *Jungle Patrol* was ever made. Finally (1) I did not attempt a cost-accounting of *Bicycle Thief, La Strada,* and *Cabiria;* and (2) I probably *wouldn't* be satisfied if half of Rome were flown over to populate Italian street sets in Wyoming.

The Woman's Place

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In her perceptive article *Women at Work* [March], Midge Decter arrives at a conclusion that, in a sense, is misleading. It is true, of course, that women who stake their pride, vanity, and ego on "the great fortune wheel of success . . . have a place of retreat when failure threatens.". . . Yet in our society, unfair though it may be, a wife takes most of the responsibility for her children's social and academic achievements. As a result, her pride and self-esteem are as closely tied to the successes and failures of her children as are her husband's to his own work. The woman who stays home to raise a family has not retreated from the battle for success; she has only shifted to another front.

DAVID ELKIND

Wheaton College
Norton, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Midge Decter's article is a regrettably unscholarly documentation of a valid thesis. Her thesis—that women in our society do not really think of themselves as paid workers—is doubtless sound, but the labor force statistics she cites—somewhat inaccurately—are also evidence of pressing economic realities of which women's attitudes toward paid work take little account. Miss Decter frequently refers to the distinction between women who work for what she calls "absolute economic necessity" and those who work merely to fill their time or for "supplementary income." She never, however, notes the difficulty inherent in attempting, in contemporary America, to distinguish between "absolute necessity" and the necessity to a family of "supplementary income," although one of her sources, the National Manpower Council's *Work in the Lives of Married Women* raises important questions on this point.

Her report contains numerous inaccuracies. For example, she states that "for a woman in her 30's with growing children to begin *training for something* would involve a psychological wrench." . . . She seems unaware that many of the women in this age group do "begin" training for something; between 1949 and 1957 there was a 127 per cent increase in the numbers of women between 25 and 34 enrolled in college as compared with 24 per cent increase for men in this same age group. (See W. Max Wise, *They Come for the Best of Reasons,* American Council on Education, 1958.)

She remarks that, "the number of working women with children under eighteen is growing, the number with children under six is getting proportionately smaller." One must ask, in proportion to what? The increase in the proportion of working mothers of school-age children has indeed been greater than the increase in the proportion of working mothers with children under six, but there has been a sharp increase during the past decade in both of these groups. Between March 1950 and March 1960 the percentage of working mothers with children under six increased from 11.9 to 18.6 per cent. (See Jacob Schiffman, "Marital and Family Characteristics of Workers, March 1960," *Monthly Labor Review,* 84:4, Table Number 7, page 363.) . . .

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THE LIBERAL MOOD

THE FUTILITARIAN SOCIETY. By WILLIAM J. NEWMAN. *George Braziller. 412 pp. $6.00.*

Reviewed by DENNIS H. WRONG

SHORTLY AFTER the 1952 Presidential election, a reporter asked Senator Robert Taft if he had read Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind.* Taft answered snappishly that he was too busy steering Republican legislative proposals through Congress to have time to read such books. Today Senator Barry Goldwater, widely regarded as Taft's successor as leader of the right wing of the Republican party, not only reads books by Kirk and other ideologues of conservatism but writes similar books himself. A few pages are even devoted to Goldwater's statements of conservative principle in William J. Newman's lengthy attack on the ideas of the conservative writers of the past decade.

Is the difference between Taft and Goldwater a sign of the increasing strength of conservatism in America? Taft, in spite or perhaps *because* of his refusal to read ideological tomes, clearly stood for something, for an existing order, a status quo—the world of the comfortable and cautious Anglo-Saxon bourgeoisie which founded and molded in its image the great inland commercial and industrial cities of the midcontinent. Taft seemed to represent this order in his very person—his rootedness in the family tradition, his precise dull manner, his politically damaging inability to suppress a condescending air toward voters, his prim bespectacled look and style of dress. But what does Goldwater represent other than his ideas and those interests which find them useful as political merchandise? Goldwater comes from the highly untraditional state of Arizona, capitalizes on glamor and good looks, looms larger on the hustings than in the work of the Senate, is an Episcopalian of Jewish descent, and, as his admirers never fail to tell us, a licensed jet pilot. Is there not something faintly absurd in such a man emerging as the apostle of militant conservatism in the land?

Although Professor Newman often tries (without always succeeding) to be funny at the expense of the assortment of publicists and thinkers he examines, he tells us repeatedly that they are not a joke, that they must be taken seriously, that they even constitute a menace for America. His repetitiveness suggests an inability entirely to suppress doubts as to whether it was really worth devoting so much effort to a point-by-point grappling with the views of Kirk, Peter Viereck, William Henry Chamberlin, James Burnham, Felix Morley, Clinton Rossiter, and the rest. Occasionally, he is content merely to insist that these men exist and are vocal, that there *is* a conservative ideology in America to be found in their books, and of this he utterly convinces us. Elsewhere he argues that it is a mistake frequently made by liberals to fail to see that these ideologists of conservatism "have considerable importance for the understanding of our political and social thought in general and of conservatism in particular." This modest claim may be granted, but then one wonders if these thinkers, with two or three notable exceptions, are really so intellectually formidable as to deserve Newman's almost exclusive concentration on their ideas and arguments, as distinct from their biographies and social loyalties. The rough handling he subjects them to indicates that he hardly believes so himself, that he is far from seeing them as the worthy and able conservative opponents whom John Stuart Mill argued that liberals and radicals should always desire in order to preserve their own integrity and maintain their reasoning powers in constant fighting trim.

Indeed one wonders if Newman would agree with Mill, for sometimes his main complaint seems to be no more than that his subjects *are* conservatives. He argues that

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they are important because "what they say is what a conservative should say," and he charges Clinton Rossiter with failure in his effort "to 'modernize' the conservative attitude toward change, because if he did he would cease to be a conservative." Newman frequently ridicules his antagonists for liking tradition, venerating the past, favoring order over the expansion of freedom, and viewing change and political innovation (often treated as identical by Newman) with suspicion. But surely these preferences are the very minimum one expects of anyone who lays claim to the conservative label; an examination of conservative ideas, even from an unsympathetic point of view, requires a more discriminating assessment of their comparative worth.

Actually, Newman succeeds in showing that most of his subjects fall back on some conception of fixed, eternal principles, established by God or the Founding Fathers or grounded in "natural right." Although he is sometimes unfair to the arguments of the men he considers, he effectively demonstrates that much, if not most, of contemporary American conservative thought ends in such a *cul de sac*. But are there no other possible intellectual foundations for a conservative ideology? Newman suggests none. He seems to regard *any* conservative outlook as necessarily intellectually contemptible and, unlike Mill and such intelligent conservatives as Rossiter, he is blind to the value of rigorous theoretical debate between liberals and conservatives, each respecting the other's right to exist and reflecting the dialectic between stability and innovation that constitutes the very process of peaceful social change.

THE BOOK'S central weaknesses result from Newman's blurring of the difference between ideas and ideologies and his consequent failure to distinguish clearly the *content* of conservative ideas from their *function* in relation to the realities of political conflict and social change in contemporary America. The very title of the book reveals this confusion: the "futilitarian society" is intended to describe *both* the ideal fixed society of the conservative thinker *and* contemporary America, which is characterized as "a grubby society playing with shoddy goods, the meaningless images, the disorderly activities, and the endless boredom of the mass society and Madison Avenue." Distrusting political innovation, the conservative ideologist in effect helps to perpetuate this society and contributes nothing to the solution of its problems. But, as Newman himself shows us, none of his conservative writers—not even the soured 19th-century liberals he calls "Old Conservatives"—offers an intellectual defense or justification of the mid-century status quo. It is as distasteful to them as to Newman himself. And in this lies their fundamental irrelevance to the complex—of jockeying interest groups, festering social problems, and unwieldy bureaucracies created to implement policies that have lost their relevance—that constitutes American reality in the 1960's. Rather than providing a reasoned defense of an existing order seen as incarnating irreplaceable values, most of Newman's subjects look backward to an idealized past. They are reactionary utopians rather than conservatives and, the speeches of Barry Goldwater to the contrary notwithstanding, have little to do with the actual forces of political and social conservatism in the United States today.

Because conservatism—resistance to change, dedication to routines, the defense of established interests—is undeniably important in contemporary America and, for that matter, everywhere else, Newman attributes equal importance to his selected philosophers of conservatism. A liberal, depressed by the Eisenhower years and anxious to see a creative political effort to deal with the problems of civil rights, urban overcrowding, and the dislocations of technological change, he charges his conservatives with encouraging apathy—with, as he puns, "burking the issue." He responds to their praise of order and stability by insisting on the historical reality of change, innovation, and conflict in human society. These are indeed the primary realities to the liberal and radical, and their ubiquity exposes conservative fixation on a particular, forever sanctified order as arbitrary, parochial, and self-indulgent. But continuity with the past, attachment to an existing way of life, and a fear of change which has often enough been vindicated by events—these too are historical realities. If one rejects conservative theories of society by pointing to the facts of social change and conflict, one's own liberal or radical theories must also be prepared to

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take into account the facts of stability and loyalty to the historically given. On the level of theory, *as distinct from that of political ideology and action,* the liberal and radical cannot afford to "burk" *these* facts.

Liberals often accuse conservatives of holding that "whatever is, is right," and jeer at the stupidity and lack of imagination suggested by this standard. Professor Newman's ideological conservatives are not, as we have seen, guilty of such simplicity; yet there is a sense in which it is a truer and sounder basis for conservatism than their desperate search for absolute verities. The phrase should be expanded to read "whatever is, is right *because it is*" in order to express the genuine conservative's deep attachment to the realities which have shaped his life and the lives of his fellows: the kind of attachment possessed to some degree by all men—even by rebels—that leads prisoners to love their bars, the oppressed their oppressors, and all of us the people and places of our childhood, however unhappy it may have been. This is the existential root of conservatism, just as the sense of freedom to choose and create is the existential root of liberalism and radicalism. But the liberal or radical must have a plan, a "project" in Sartre's sense, to transcend the existent; the conservative needs none. Thus the liberal or radical is inescapably an ideologist, while the wisest conservatives have been sincerely anti-ideological. Epigoni, however, attempt to construct an ideology out of the latter's insights, which, as Professor Newman points out with reference to his chosen group of thinkers, invariably assumes the appearance of a synthetic counter-ideology, a derivative and belated response to the challenge of the liberal-radical outlook.

In concentrating on the insufficient rationale for his attack on conservative ideology, I have neglected some other features of Professor Newman's book. He also discusses three non-conservatives, Daniel Boorstin, Louis Hartz, and Daniel Bell, whom he finds guilty of purveying a "conservative mood." The chapter on Bell makes a number of valuable criticisms of Bell's rather special use of the term "ideology" when he proclaims the "end of ideology," which stands in contrast to his acute demonstration elsewhere of the necessarily ideological character of politics in a democracy. Newman also levels a conventional and curiously abstract assault on suburbia, relying heavily on *Crestwood Heights,* a study which, although the authors are evasive on this point, actually deals not with a new postwar middle-class suburb but with a somewhat older and distinctly upper-income residential area, located, it so happens, in this reviewer's native city of Toronto, Canada. Newman closes with a brilliant exposé of the emptiness of the prevalent keening about America's lack of "national purpose."

Many of the chapters of *The Futilitarian Society* read best as high-level polemical articles or reviews, which is what some of them originally were. Unfortunately, their tone and style become monotonous after several hundred pages in the absence of a fuller statement of the author's intent and his own credo.

A VISIONARY PLANNER

NACHMAN SYRKIN: SOCIALIST ZIONIST—A Biographical Memoir and Selected Essays. By MARIE SYRKIN. *Herzl Press. 332pp. $5.00.*

Reviewed by MILTON HINDUS

NACHMAN SYRKIN was the founder of that political movement which has guided the State of Israel since its inception and which earned its leading place by the role it played in Palestinian life for many years before the state was founded. Yet in spite of his undoubted historical importance, his name is known to few members of the general public here. He died in New York in 1924, a generation before his associate David Ben Gurion became Prime Minister, and those who may be interested in the origin of the principles governing Ben Gurion's thinking may profitably look for it in this book. It is more than an act of family piety for his daughter, Marie Syrkin, to write a memoir of her father and to reprint translations of some of his more influential essays.

Miss Syrkin remembers her childhood and youth and the wanderings of her family over the face of the earth as a time not only of danger and suffering but of adventure and romance and real enjoyment. These feelings have the effect of making her reminiscences lively reading. Here, for example, is a para-

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graph giving us the flavor of her family's life in Paris prior to 1905: "Under the exigencies of her life, my mother, the former medical student, developed unexpected skills. She became an excellent seamstress—so good that she insisted on making my father's suits out of shiny black alpaca which could be bought cheaply in bolts. My father looked dubious but the enterprise was obviously reasonable. Tailors were a bourgeois convention; if a woman could make a dress for herself and her little daughter why not a man's suit? One bought a pattern and cut it. I don't recall the suits but friends who did assured me that Dr. Syrkin's costumes were viewed with consternation even by his impecunious comrades."

She has attempted self-consciously to avoid sentimentality and the hero-worshiping attitude of a dutiful daughter, and she has succeeded admirably. She is not afraid to characterize qualities of her father revealed in one of his speeches as "naiveté, impertinence, and idealism." In fact, through the greater part of the book she leans over backward to be objective about him, and the portrait that emerges is not unlike that of a Don Quixote. Dr. Syrkin's idea of a proper curriculum for a girl entering her teens, for instance, was to teach her the Bible in Hebrew, Marx in German, and Spinoza in Latin. Even a John Stuart Mill might have been overtaxed by such labors, and Miss Syrkin candidly admits that she never got beyond the first chapters of the great books thrust upon her attention. But if she is frank about her father's character, she is no less so about her own. She tells a curious story about the time when, during a prolonged absence of her father abroad, having some difficulty in finding storage space for his extensive library, she made the decision to sell a large part of it to a second-hand book dealer. When he returned from his travels and was told what had happened to his books, he said simply: "I think I will have a heart attack."

When Syrkin was reburied in Israel in 1951, we are told, Prime Minister Ben Gurion stepped to the edge of the open grave and said in Hebrew: "Syrkin, *hazonkhah yitkayem,* your vision will be fulfilled." This "vision" was a kind of centaur, theoretically speaking, which grafted together modern ideas of nationalism and socialism. However repellent the mixture seemed from a logical point of view, it proved potent and explosive from a psychological one. For if Marx discovered a formula of fission (class struggle) by which society was detonated in revolution, it was his early associate and later antagonist, Moses Hess, who first adumbrated those ideas of fusion (of socialism and nationalism) which have made the most noise in the 20th century and are still being heard from around the world. I say "adumbrated," but I do not mean to imply that anyone has succeeded quite in clarifying the theory since that time. Clear or not, the strange brew *worked* with astonishing effectiveness, and this was enough to recommend it to Syrkin who, after settling in this country with his family in 1908, recognized gratefully the invigorating effect upon his movement of American pragmatism, with its comparative indifference to purely intellectual difficulties or even outright inconsistencies. He writes with satisfaction concerning the early history of that movement: "In 1905–6, Socialist Zionist ideas began to take root in the United States. In America, where the Jewish working class was not subject to a particular school of thought, and where every theory was measured by its practical results and possibilities, there was no room for the airy abstractions of Russian Poale Zionism."

Both nationalism and socialism were "in the air" among East European Jewry around the turn of the century when Syrkin began his work. These impulses found expression in two separate movements, at loggerheads with each other in many respects, Zionism and the Bund. The first to discern any connection between them were the Russian social democrats, Plekhanov and Lenin. Plekhanov "wittily" referred to members of the Bund, in spite of their professed and vehement anti-Zionism, as "Zionists who are afraid of a sea-journey." And Lenin sagely observed that Jewish nationalism has "an evidently reactionary character, not only in the form advocated by its consistent champions the Zionists, but also in that of the Bundists who try to combine it with social democracy. This idea runs contrary to the interests of the Jewish proletariat inasmuch as it creates directly and

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indirectly an attitude hostile to assimilation, a ghetto philosophy."

Syrkin's original proposal to fuse the ideas of nationalism and socialism was made in *Die Judenfrage und der sozialistische Judenstaat* (translated in this book simply as *The Socialist Jewish State*), which appeared in 1898. There he wrote: "For a Jewish state to come into being, it must, from the outset, avoid the ills of modern life. To evoke the sympathetic interest of modern man, its guidelines must be justice, rational planning, and social solidarity. Once a Jewish state has been realized on scientific social principles, the time will come for modern technology to flourish within it. The Jewish state can come about only if it is socialist; only by fusing with socialism can Zionism become the ideal of the whole Jewish people—of the proletariat, the middle class, and the intelligentsia."

THOSE who are searching for some clue to the qualities that made Syrkin a leader of a movement which has established and maintained a free government (an impressive accomplishment which demands, according to Edmund Burke, "a sagacious, powerful, and combining mind") are not likely to find it in his own formal writings. This literary effort, like that of another eminent national leader in our time, Sun Yat-sen, is not particularly illuminating. It must have been some quality of heart or character rather than of mind alone to which such men owed their positions of authority.

I find the barest hint of an exceptional personal and emotional quality in a letter which he addressed to his daughter from Jaffa in 1920: "After years of working and dreaming of Palestine I am now in the land of our future and past. I feel as if we are continuing the great prophetic past and reviving its glory on this sacred soil, which is the cradle of humanity and has a great destiny in the future. It is a splendid country full of innumerable beauties and wonders. It is a permanent spring, so the fields begin to be covered with flowers and blossoms. The soil is not cultivated, but traveling around we meet wonderful groves of oranges, lemons, olives, wine, mostly in Jewish hands. . . . On the mountain of Zion in Jerusalem, in a calm sacred night, one comes in contact with all human heroes of philosophy and ethics, and feels the great truth of Immanuel Kant's words: 'burning stars over me and the moral law in me.'"

Marie Syrkin herself is rather harder in her judgment on these romantic "effusions" than she ought to be. In spite of their travelogue banality, her father's words are moving because he himself is moved. One believes him when he writes: "My eyes were full of tears, and personal tragedy was emphasized but also elevated by universal tragedy. I visited also Bethlehem and Hebron where the graves of Rachel and the patriarchs are to be seen. Dear and sacred legends!"

In the matter of practical politics, Syrkin's judgment was sometimes sadly awry. In Isaiah Berlin's terminology, he was a hedgehog rather than a fox. He knew and was capable of communicating One Big Truth; it was the many little truths on the way which defied him. The great political "boners" chronicled in this book were, first, his being a Territorialist for years along with Israel Zangwill (that is, refusing to identify Jewish longing for a homeland with Palestine in particular); second, his being in favor of his movement's joining the Third International after the October Revolution in Russia. In this he was joined by Ben Gurion. In 1920, the Poale Zion movement split into two parts; the left wing consisted mainly of Russian and Polish Jews who wanted to join the Third International, while the right wing consisted mainly of American, Austrian, and Palestinian Jews who wanted to stay in the Zionist fold. Organizationally, Syrkin stayed with the right wing, but he thought that his group should belong both to the Zionist movement and the Third International. This position became somewhat academic when the Third International rudely rejected the application for admission even of the radical Left Poale Zionists, but Syrkin's quixotic attempt to yoke together such an unruly pair of steeds as the World Zionist Organization and the Third International is characteristic. To a group of disciples applying for clarification during the crisis, he is reported to have said: "To save unnecessary questions, let's get this clear: I am for participation in the Zionist Congress *and* the Third International. I admire the Red

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Army *and* I believe in the Jewish Legion. I am for Hebrew and not Yiddish." No wonder that his followers are reported to have left "perplexed and shocked."

How utopian, romantic, and unrealistic sound the words now which Ben Gurion addressed during the critical period of 1920 to Syrkin, with whom he thought he found himself in agreement. He urges Syrkin to go to Russia to explain his position personally to the Bolshevik leaders. He speaks of "the social-ethical power" of the new regime and goes on to say: "In my view there is no International save the Third and the place of every socialist is in it. . . . We must establish contact with its leaders. We must, through personal contact, explain to them the nature of Zionism, and particularly the nature of Socialist-Zionism, and the role of the labor movement in Palestine." Marie Syrkin is, of course, in order when she points out that "one must remember that these words were written in 1920 in the dawn of the revolution, years before the great disillusionment, when many socialists still hoped that the path of Communism would be toward a socialist democracy not dictatorship." To be sure, it was many years before the more notorious of the Moscow Trials, but it was quite some time *after* the forcible dispersal of the Constituent Assembly and the Red Terror (directed not only at adherents of the Czarist regime but at those of other socialist and democratic parties) had opened the eyes of many radicals who were less wilfully deluded than these two Zionists.

The account in this book of how stubborn error could be persisted in for such long periods of time by responsible leaders—before being finally abandoned because of refutation by reality—may perhaps throw some light on recent difficulties between the leadership of the State of Israel and American Jewry, and may possibly encourage the hope that such problems are not permanent in nature. In short, the interest and importance of the chapter which Marie Syrkin has added in her book to world Jewish history in the 20th century seems to me to commend it to the attention of a much broader public than that afforded by the relatively limited movement which her father founded and of which she is the present editorial spokesman in America.

INTERVIEWING THE AMERICAN MIND

As We Are. By Henry Brandon. *Doubleday. 282 pp. $4.50.*

Reviewed by Dan Jacobson

Rather to my surprise, I found *As We Are* a depressing book to go through. On the face of it, it shouldn't be depressing at all. Here we have seventeen very eminent Americans, representing government, labor, journalism, the arts, and science, interviewed by Henry Brandon, the Washington correspondent of the London *Sunday Times*. Mr. Brandon is a knowledgeable and sympathetic interviewer; he has obviously chosen the participants in the book with care; and they all talk freely and at length about their own special fields and about America at large. The book is handsomely produced, and is embellished by portraits of each of the people interviewed—President Kennedy looking more worn, less smooth, than in any other photograph of him that I have seen; Margaret Mead caught in mid-sentence; an effulgent Marilyn Monroe smiling broadly past her husband, who smiles too, but narrowly; Werner von Braun looking healthy and altogether unabashed.

Is this why I found the book depressing? Because it is so insidiously easy to make gossip about it? I suspect that that is partly the reason. After all, if I am really interested in what Reinhold Niebuhr believes about the separation of church and state in the United States, I should make the effort to read, let us say, *The Godly and the Ungodly*; if I am curious about cybernetics, Norbert Wiener has written books on the subject which are more informative than any interview could be; Edmund Wilson has expressed his views of American culture at greater length and with greater refinement than he possibly could over a tape-recorder. So what is the most obvious, immediate attraction of the book, if not that of the "human" interest it seems to offer? But the truly depressing thing about the kind of "human" interest which one is inclined to derive from books of this kind is that it always threatens to dehumanize the people involved in it. They become mouths, faces, views, representatives, experts, personalities; they cease to be human beings. Even the

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gossip that is stimulated is without real body, without any truly personal quality, and has to feed off photographs and the snippets of information given in Mr. Brandon's introductions to his subjects. Werner von Braun's desk was "cluttered"; Walter Reuther's office was "spacious"; Edmund Wilson's Talcotville home stands "isolated and remote"; Senator Kennedy (as he then was) forgot to eat his breakfast while he was being interviewed. Compared to the absorption of facts of this kind, one realizes that to read *The Wound and the Bow* or to look at a Ben Shahn painting or a Thurber cartoon is to take part in a personal, individual exchange.

Yet to speak as if that were the beginning and the end of the matter is to be unfair to Mr. Brandon and to those who have cooperated with him in the book. It is all very well to announce in a cavalier, self-congratulatory way that one can read Norbert Wiener and Reinhold Niebuhr and Richard M. Nixon and Walter Reuther and Margaret Mead for oneself, thank you very much, but in fact the chances are that one does *not* read them for oneself; not all of them, at any rate. The best aspect of a book like *As We Are* is that it is an attempt to give life to the all-but-extinct notion of an intellectual community; to reassert the belief that meaningful exchange is possible between those following different intellectual disciplines. The very title of the book is a challenge to the reader, particularly to the American reader, to see himself and his country, even his world, as a reflection of all the disparate views and activities which are the preoccupations of those who have contributed to the volume. These aims are undeniably worthy, and they are pursued with tact and vigor in *As We Are,* and with what is really the minimum degree of vulgarization. There is, for example, very little "talking down" in it: almost everybody says what he has to say in the language that comes most easily to him, and not in what he imagines will be the language that comes most easily to the reader.

THE TROUBLE IS that while *As We Are* is serious enough to raise all the old questions about the intellectual dispersion, fragmentation, and incoherence of our society, it is not serious enough—not wise enough, not individual enough, not tenacious enough—to offer any kind of answer to them. Brought deafeningly together between hard covers, the over-all effect of all these conversations is merely to remind one of how far away we are from having an intellectual community; how difficult it is to achieve meaningful exchange between our various disciplines. As far as the "community" is concerned, there is the elementary, unsettled problem of deciding who is entitled to speak for us—some of Mr. Brandon's participants seem to have little to say, little to offer, apart from their own fashionable names. And as for the possibilities of exchange, what struck me about the book is how rare it was for a point raised in one interview to be expanded, elaborated, or answered in any other interview; each contributor seems to speak in a funnel or tunnel of his own, and the others hear little outside it but echoes and reverberations. I realize that *As We Are* was not intended to be a symposium; my point is that, had the book really been successful, it would have become one anyway. But it never does, in spite of the fact that so many contributors inevitably have in common certain deep anxieties. The contributors are anxious about conformity in American life; about the effects of affluence; about the problems of leisure; about the quality of American education; they are anxious, above all, about the threat of nuclear war.

None of these anxieties is directly political in character; at least, not as one usually thinks of politics. For this reason even John Kennedy and Richard Nixon hardly appear to talk like politicians in their interviews (instead, they try to talk like statesmen); and nobody else, with the possible exception of Walter Reuther, comes anywhere near talking of particular, precise social policies, and of the manipulation of opinion and power to gain support for such policies. This is perhaps the chief difference between *As We Are* and any comparable book which might be put together in France, say, or even in present-day England. What the apparent "de-politicization" of American intellectual life portends for American society I leave to others to decide; for myself I must candidly confess that reading these seventeen interviews has sated my appetite for large-scale cultural generalizations, and inhibited my capacity to make them.

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I think that after all the reverberations have died down, I will remember this book for just two remarks, one noteworthy for its sadness, the other for its silliness. The sad remark is made by Edmund Wilson, at the end of his interview, when he says simply: "What really discourages me about literary life today is how ineffective the influence of writers on people's minds is." The silly remark is made by Arthur Miller at the beginning of his interview, when he says about Miss Monroe, "She has made sex a part of existence."

AID AND MODERNIZATION

INDIA AND THE WEST. By BARBARA WARD. *Norton. 256 pp. $4.50.*

Reviewed by E. F. SCHUMACHER

THIS ENGAGING BOOK, written by a highly accomplished writer, is a passionate appeal to the Western conscience to give economic aid to India on a much larger scale and firmer basis than has ever been contemplated hitherto. The Marshall Plan put Europe on its economic feet; we now need "a 'Marshall' decision with regard to Indian aid." If the West fails to rise to this challenge, we are told, Communism will win, and "the West would begin to look like Mr. Khrushchev's picture of it—a few capitalist buttons sewn on to a Communist coat." We should let India have aid, preferably in the form of outright subsidies, of $2 billion a year, a mere two-fifths of one per cent of the combined national incomes of the rich countries of the West, and perhaps not even one-sixtieth of what they spend on arms. Such a transfer of income from the wealthy to the poor will stave off world Communism, yet it "is not a bribe or a dole or a means of buying off the Communists. It is not charity. It is justice."

"This is the West's unfinished business," says Miss Ward. Through imperialism and colonialism the Western powers, "having achieved the first breakthrough into economic growth," have started something which they cannot now, in justice, leave unfinished.

> They launched all the continents on the tremendous experiment of modernization, and opened them up to trade and settlement whether they wanted it or not. They carried to them new ideas of economic and national equality which effectively helped to undermine old ideas and old institutions. But now, with the ruins all around them of traditional societies, and with painful struggles apparent on every side of a new order waiting to be born, the Western powers suddenly seem to be abdicating—as though the wrecker's job were enough, and they had little interest in the buildings to be raised on the world's dismantled sites.

These are, perhaps, hard words, but there is truth in them. "With the ruins all around us" there must be reconstruction. How is it to be done? Miss Ward says that the modern industrialized world offers two possible patterns:

> The informal, experimental Western mixture of market forces and government direction, relying on a considerable degree of decentralized decision-making and local initiative; and Russia's total state plan imposed from above by iron political control.

She believes that the underdeveloped world has to choose precisely between these two, and she wishes, of course, that it should choose the former. But what is the picture—or image, as one says today—which the Western world is projecting of itself? "In the West today, the engine of progress seems to lack the motor power of social discontent. 'You never had it so good' is the theme of modern elections, 'I'm all right, Jack' the motto of once militant trade unions." On the other hand, glossing over the force and the tyranny and looking only at the propaganda, "one might say that in the world at large it is Communism that chiefly expresses the profoundest aspirations of the West." Hard words again, and if they are true, what remains of the "possible pattern" offered by the West?

I MUST CONFESS THAT I find it exceedingly difficult to make out what Miss Ward is really saying. The West is affluent, and affluence makes it easy to practice tolerance, liberality, and a modicum of social justice, just as it makes it unnecessary to drive people to work and to impose upon them excessive

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burdens of labor while keeping their consumption at a minimum. But the affluent society can hardly be a model for the poor. How did it become affluent? Miss Ward invites us (or does she?) to "leave out of account some of the most economically resourceful but politically barren of economic breakthroughs which followed after the British experience," namely, Germany, Russia, and Japan (but later on she often seems to take Japan as a model). In her view, the really paradigmatic example is that of Britain.

> In Britain, on the contrary, flexible institutions and a more moderate spirit of reform interacted upon each other to produce not a single violent revolutionary upheaval, but a steady process of accommodation. . . . The Reform Bill of 1832 set in motion the extension of the rights and liberties of the few to the people at large.

No one would wish to underestimate the importance of these political developments; but what was the economic condition of the people at that time and for a long time thereafter?

> The miseries of the poor, the wretched labors of little children, squalid slums, desperate outbreaks of industrial unrest, the disproportionate growth of wealth among those who were wealthy already—they were simply costs, regrettable perhaps but inevitable, that had to be paid in return for the increase in power and wealth of the community as a whole. This attitude was not all hardness of heart or social complacency.

Well, then, is this supposed to be the model for the underdeveloped world? Such a system, when practiced today, particularly under the flag of Communism, is being, and deserves to be, condemned as "hardness of heart and social complacency." As Miss Ward knows, it *produced* the protest and revolt of Marxism, and can in no way be reconciled with the values of an "open society." Yet she seems to be advocating (or is she not?) something of just that kind.

> In a very poor society, the provision of incentives runs into the agonizing problems of justice and "fair shares." In the domestic economy as in the great arena of the world market, the law of "to him who hath" still rules. If you want maximum output you must give the vigorous, enterprising man his head, you must back the expanding enterprise, look out for the most profitable techniques, put more funds into the richest regions. In the long run, such policies can pay off in terms of a better life for everyone. Provided wealth is being created, some of it can be taxed away and redistributed. But the immediate effect is to accentuate and increase existing inequalities. The farmer with twenty-five acres moves further away from the farmer with five. . . . Modern enterprise wipes out village enterprise. The Punjab and Gujerat grow richer. The Eastern United Provinces slip further behind.

Anyone who has seen the deep poverty of the Eastern United Provinces will shudder at the thought of their slipping further behind, for this would not simply be a "relative" slipping but a further impoverishment. When modern enterprise, concentrated in a few metropolitan areas, "wipes out village enterprise," hundreds of millions of people are left with nothing but a low-level agriculture which, for the lack of cultural or industrial stimulus, can only deteriorate further.

I AM SIMPLY AT A LOSS to understand the meaning of the suggestion that there are two models of industrialization and modernization, the Western and the Communist, between which India might make a meaningful choice. And here I come to another very puzzling feature. The book is called *India and the West,* but I cannot really find *India* in the book at all. Of course, India is mentioned all the time but, it seems to me, the reference is not to India as a real, living entity, but merely to some 430 million anonymous people, most of whom are exceedingly poor.

> To create the conditions of modern living for over 400 million people, to rescue from extreme poverty nearly half the inhabitants of the free yet under-developed world, to bring into the age of atomic energy and outer space one of the most ancient of the world's great civilizations....

This does not seem to me to be a correct statement of the issue. I have no desire to quibble over words, but I think a writer of Miss Ward's quality wishes to be taken seri-

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ously when she defines the subject of her book. What does it mean "to bring into the age of atomic energy and outer space one of the most ancient of the world's great civilizations"? It can only mean to abandon this civilization, to give up everything that is specifically Indian, to complete what Miss Ward had previously called "the wrecker's job" and turn India into a copy of either Russia or America. What does it mean "to create the conditions of modern living"? The author herself quotes Hamlet's bitter question—"What is a man/If his chief good and market/of his time/Be but to sleep and feed?"—and predicts utter destruction for the Western peoples "if they carry on with their round of fun and distraction, their TV and their quiz shows, their golf and their tourism, while all across the world the pressures of poverty and despair steadily gather strength." "Ah," it might be said, "this is not what we mean by 'modern.' " Very well, but then it should not be suggested that the only salvation for India is the copying either of the modern West or of the West's heretical offspring, Communist Russia.

Maybe Miss Ward believes that no third alternative is feasible. But in her book she has not even considered the question. Every destruction of an Indian institution or custom is simply hailed as an advance. There is a dangerous trait of "historicism" going right through the book, suggesting that history is not made by men but by certain irresistible movements, like the movement of "modernization"—whatever that may mean.

> Those who offer new molds for the lava flow of human hope are certainly working with and not against the general movement of the age: a visionary age, impatient, violent, and aspiring.

I think it should at least have been mentioned that there are many influential and thoughtful Indians who do not accept this alleged "movement of the age," who are not propelled by atomic and outer-space visions, but have dedicated their lives to patient and non-violent work for those who are most in need of help. Jayaprakash Narayan is twice mentioned in Miss Ward's book, but there is no hint even of his conviction that India's current policies of Westernization, as summed up in the Third Five Year Plan, are likely to lead to utter ruination. Vinoba Bhave also receives a mention, but I think the reader ought to have been warned that Vinoba's views are diametrically opposed to those of the planners in Delhi.* Many other outstanding men could be quoted, and what do they have in common? Simply the belief that fruitful development in India must take as its point of departure not some theoretical notions of "modernization" or "industrialization," of Western Capitalism or Russian Communism, but the simple needs and capabilities of hundreds of millions of humble Indian cultivators, artisans, and laborers.

Miss Ward's immensely readable and persuasive book, I think, fails to give the reader a fair and reasonably complete exposition of its subject matter. It is a propaganda tract to mobilize aid for India. As such, I hope it will succeed.

THE TASTE OF PRINT

LITERATURE AND THE PRESS. By LOUIS DUDEK. *Ryerson and Contact Press. 238 pp. $5.00.*

Reviewed by HARRIS DIENSTFREY

THESE DAYS PRINT seems ubiquitous. Institutes have sprung up throughout the country to teach adults to read faster. Who otherwise could manage to keep pace even with the comparatively few new pages that concern themselves only with one's most personal interests? So it is that every now and then there comes upon one a weariness with reading—a new fact, another novel, yet a grander theory—and such a repugnance for print that the simple act of not reading becomes as soothing as the most restful sleep. And so one goes to the movies. But the mad, modern lust to read will not be quelled; and the result, in simple fact, is this review, and this issue of this magazine—and the issues last month of every other magazine, and next month's issues as well, and the ones after that, and all the issues and editions of the magazines and books still unborn but as certain to be as are the seven hundred-odd words on this one single page. How did it all begin? What does it mean? Where will it end?

Literature and the Press, by Louis Dudek,

* See "Last of the Saints," by Arthur Koestler, COMMENTARY, February 1960—ED.

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mainly concerns itself with the development of print in England. Dudek argues that the deluge began after 1800. Though Gutenberg had invented movable type around the middle of the 15th century, his press was both hand-operated and made of wood, an extremely short-lived material. The increase of printed matter during the next three centuries was gradual. The thirteen hundred copies of the unusually large first edition of *Paradise Lost* took seven years to sell, and from that epic Milton earned approximately ten English pounds. By 1800, about six hundred books in average editions of six hundred copies were being printed each year.

In 1798, the third Earl of Stanhope, "an excellent amateur scientist, republican, and inventor of musical and scientific instruments," devised the first major improvement since Gutenberg: an iron press. Though still hand-operated, the new press was infinitely more durable than Gutenberg's and doubled the size of the paper that could be struck off at one time. Other improvements followed rapidly: steam power was applied to running the press in 1811 and to the making of paper in 1816; wood pulp was developed around 1850 to replace the rag used, until then, for the manufacture of paper.

The total circulation of all English newspapers in 1711 had been slightly over 2 million; by 1836 it had jumped to around 39 million. Dudek makes the point that until 1815, the circulations of the leading newspapers were "virtually equal to the capacity of the printing press," but that their growth had been constrained from 1815 to 1836, for political reasons, by a Stamp Tax that made their price prohibitive. With the tax reduced, circulation mushroomed; by 1854, it had increased to approximately three times the 39 million of 1836. Magazines grew at a comparable pace, books less dramatically. Even so, the estimated 36,000 volumes during 1800—six hundred copies each of six hundred books—rose to about one million by 1827.

This history of printing indicates how one development of the industrial revolution led to another. Without iron, Stanhope could not have built his press; without steam, the press could not have been mechanized; without the enormous growth of the textile industry, there would not have been enough rags for paper. But what, then, were the consequences of the printed word? About thirty-five years ago, the well-known sociologist Robert E. Park, in a short essay, "The Natural History of the Newspaper," suggested one relatively recent, but perhaps characteristic, effect. "In a sense," he wrote, department stores were "a creation of the Sunday newspaper": women read the Sunday papers before they read the dailies, and "the women are the buyers." But Dudek does not focus upon such social effects of print; his foremost concern is with the effect it has had on literary art and popular taste.

LITERATURE AND THE PRESS argues that the mechanical perfection of printing—for reasons of profit—has worked to oppose the creation of individual works of art and has led instead to the issuance of huge masses of print which, in turn, have steadily barbarized literature and popular taste. "We are passing now through a time of erosion of literary values worse than any which can be recalled in Western civilization . . .; and this destruction threatens, in a period of mass cultures and highly organized power, to become permanent. Whether we can stop this . . . is the question for our age." While the newspaper "encourages a uniform group outlook and emotional response among millions of readers, and leaves the independent minority helpless against its mass influence," literature (by which Dudek means individual creations of worth) has gradually lost its audience; only the "independent minority" remains. As a result, Dudek goes on to argue, modern literature has become increasingly difficult and personal; its first appearance is usually in "little magazines," the response of a minority to quantity production and the profit system. The best is no longer the most popular; and the most popular is rarely the best. Between the artist and his potential audience stands the profit-making press.

Dudek devotes three long chapters to the careers of Dickens, Thackeray, and Carlyle, to exemplify how each of these men was affected differently by the pressures of mass printing—in either choice of subject matter, development of style, or control over output. Considerations that had nothing to do with the value of their work became determinants of that work: each man had to maintain a sufficiently large audience to earn enough money to warrant publication.

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Parts of this complex argument are true enough. In the past century and a half, individual artists have experienced either an increasingly vague sense of their audience, or have felt it growing smaller and smaller. The best in literature during this time has certainly not made the most money, and very often the best has become a type of private art rather than a "public" communication. But the general terms that Dudek uses to explain the effects of these phenomena often seem to me to confuse moral and aesthetic judgments with social analysis. In this respect, *Literature and the Press* does not differ from any number of current discussions of popular taste, or mass culture, or our vanishing arts. The "decline" of literature is one question; the significance of this decline another.

What does it mean to speak of the barbarization of taste? In such phrases as "the present stage of barbarous levelling down," "a time of erosion of literary values," and "popular taste today is even more commercialized and barbarized [than in the Victorian age]," Dudek seems to use the concept in two more or less distinct ways: first, that in 1800 ten people read the best books, while now (give and take the proper proportional adjustments) only five people read them; and, second, that the "average" reader knew and cared more about literary standards in 1800 than he does now. It is clear that both propositions assume the acceptance of aesthetic criteria concerning what is best in literature; and both imply, as do Dudek's own phrases, the existence of a body of relatively clear supporting evidence. As for the first assumption, I would only say that aesthetic judgments are much less debatable when they concern literature which is a hundred years old than when they concern contemporary works, and, moreover, that standards relevant to the former are not equally or even necessarily relevant to the latter. (Typically enough, *Literature and the Press* leaves its aesthetic criteria unexplicated.) As for the second assumption, I find the evidence neither certain nor clear. Is the shifting number of readers or the change in prose styles during the past hundred years, or the current availability of paperbacks, sufficient proof of either a declining or a rising taste? None of these phenomena has a definite unambiguous meaning. Dudek himself writes: "There are a great many good books written and published, and there are many readers for such books today."

Yet these particular problems, though seldom taken into account, are obviously manageable. But the notion of "barbarization" contains a considerably more significant assumption: that the average readers of 1800 and 1961 make up comparable groups. Here the problem is a conceptual one. For the growth of cities, the expansion of industry, the development of public education, the absorption of women into the business world—these changes have created an entirely new "average" audience. It did not develop out of (or degenerate from) a "higher" group of the 19th century. Yet the proponents of barbarization treat any estimate of the new audience's inferiority as if it were solid evidence of a continuing corruption. In terms of the old audience, the new may represent a profound falling-off in taste; but in terms of its own taste of twenty-five years ago, the new audience may now be more sophisticated. This second comparison is as relevant to the theory of barbarization as the first.

IN ANOTHER SENSE, however, the entire argument of *Literature and the Press* presents the reader with nothing less than an ostensibly clear-cut choice between art and non-art (the book's title amounts to the neatest formulation of this alternative). "The issue, for us, is the survival of the literary art, as against script writers and newspaper men, in the mass communications society of the future." I do not believe the history of print can be summarized so simply. An important part of that history has been the development of new genres to satisfy the demands of new publics. One such genre was the novel; another, more recently, has been the comic strip. (Dudek's ultimate alternatives are still relevant, of course; all literary forms do not embody equally profound or complex insights, and a great novel surely provides a more satisfying experience than a great comic strip.) The argument of *Literature and the Press* implies such juxtapositions as Dickens and Mickey Spillane, Addison's *Spectator* and the *Daily Mail;* but its art/non-art terminology obscures the full implications of these

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contrasts. Thus, one juxtaposition is never implied, the juxtaposition of genres—of Dicken's novels, for example, with Walt Kelly's *Pogo*. Partly because of this lapse, the book completely disregards the crucial fact that different genres are the products of different social conditions. And by avoiding such issues, the basic question raised by *Literature and the Press* is reduced, finally, to only a matter of snobbery.

The importance of Dudek's book lies in its factual history, which it relates and details with skill. (For example, in underlining the different rates of growth between newspapers and magazines, on the one hand, and books, on the other, it suggests something about the composition of the new publics after 1800.) Dudek's conclusions follow less from his understanding of this history than from the facts themselves, and his final comments have an interest of their own. He suggests in passing that "if the new visual and sound machines succeed in attracting the millions from newspapers, magazines, and the kinds of books which are now popular, the result can only benefit printed books and literature as a whole." But Dudek takes this possibility to be little more than an unrealistic hope. He believes the grounds for the "darkest prophecy . . . that the book is disappearing from our midst," are quite strong. He has no doubt that unless the press's assault on literature can be stopped, literature will not survive.

As incidental support for his conclusions, Dudek mentions the predictions of Marshall McLuhan, the Canadian student of popular culture. McLuhan foresees a demise not only of literature but of book culture altogether. Yet, unlike Dudek, he does not expect a cultural apocalypse—and is reasonable not to, I think. If books in general, good and bad, were to lose their influence, and a number of presses were, in fact, to find themselves out of business, how cataclysmic would the result be? That culture then, would it really belong to the barbarians?

SOME RECENT JEWISH BOOKS

What It Means To Be a Jew, by Charles E. Shulman (Crown, 256 pp., $3.95).

About forty short chapters on Judaism, Jewishness, the *Judenfrage,* Israel, and Zionism by a disciple of Stephen S. Wise. Sketches of Sholem Asch, Leo Baeck, Hayyim Greenberg, and Ludwig Lewisohn are among the ten biographies.

On the Track of Tyranny, edited by Max Beloff (Valentine, Mitchell, 232 pp., 35s.).

A *Festschrift* dedicated to L. G. Montefiore, chairman of the Wiener Library, and commemorating its 25th anniversary. (The Library, in London, is a major center for research on the Third Reich and the Jewish fate under the Nazis.) This is an international book, with seven papers in English, three in German, and two in French. The writers include Alan Bullock and Eva G. Reichmann, on the problems of contemporary history; the late Philip Friedman, on the Karaites under Nazi rule; James Joll, on Germany and the Spanish Civil War; and Léon Poliakov, on Nuremberg and Vichy.

No Easy Answers, by Philip M. Klutznick (Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, 138 pp., $3.50).

Reflections on the American Jewish community by a former president of B'nai B'rith. (On the whole, he likes it.) Wary of one big, general reform, he sees a need for many reforms. The liveliest chapter is "When You've Got the Votes, Don't Use Them," about unity and voluntarism.

The First Step: A Primer of a Jew's Spiritual Life, Selected [i.e., written] by Meshullam Zalman ben Hayyah Gitel ha-Kohen [Zalman M. Schachter], published for G-d's Greater Glory by David ben Ita and Menahem Mendl ben Hannah (u-ven Daniel) with editorial help of Esther bat Toybe Leah and Sarah bat Rebekah.

This is one of the most remarkable (and impressive) things I have seen in a long time. It looks like a bad imitation of one of those old five-cent Haldemann-Julius Little Blue Books; its author is an Orthodox rabbi who is a Lubavitcher Hasid and Hillel director at the University of Manitoba with a graduate degree in the psychology of religion; and it is a sort of introduction to

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spiritual exercises. It is addressed to "seekers" and takes nothing else for granted—even a knowledge of Hebrew, at the beginning. A brief bibliography at the end is almost pointedly indifferent about the non-Orthodoxy of authors.

Social Work and Jewish Values, by Alfred J. Kutzik (Public Affairs Press, 101 pp., $3.25).

At last, an answer to the old, vexing question: What is, or should be, Jewish about Jewish social work? But what an answer! These are excerpts, somewhat condensed:

(1) Jewish social workers must resolve the major conflict between their professional and personal selves *by recognizing and rejecting those Jewish values in conflict with social work and buttressing their social work values with consonant Jewish ones.*

(2) Capitulation to the view that Jewish values are of divine origin theoretically removes the conduct of Jewish personal and communal affairs from human control, negating the essence of social work. Practically, it removes Jewish social life from secular-scientific control and places it in the realm of religion.

(3) What are the values [!] which the Deuteronomist and the prophets spoke out against? Excessive [?] economic exploitation by the upper classes of the lower, legal corruption favoring the rich over the poor, and disregard for the welfare of the needy. Isaiah recognized that it was his own class and its ideology which was the source of the oppression and corruption of his time.

(4) Doctrinaire individualism in its purest, most crystalline form can be found in marginal Jews like that foremost student of the "marginal man," David Riesman. Reform Judaism continues to be a major vector of individualism among Jews because of its bias against communal-organizational life outside the synagogue. Rabbi Jacob Agus, a leader of the "right wing" of the Conservative movement [!], holds that "Judaism must be made to serve the individual—not the other way round." These "liberal," "modern," and "American" views are only the latest secular and religious versions of the traditional anti-democratic values of the superiority of the individual (or individual group) over the community.

(5) The question for Jewish social workers is "Jewish democratic content or Jewish anti-democratic content?" Unlike "What is Jewish content?" the problem of "What is democratic Jewish content?" can be solved. Not whether a social agency celebrates Hanukkah or Passover counts, but how it does so. Does it emphasize human reason and communal effort or miracles and divine guidance? Does it emphasize leadership by an individual or an elite group, the national-culture "superiority" of Jews over others, etc., or their democratic and historically accurate opposites? A basketball game involving Jewish people in democratic process should be considered better Jewish programming than a "traditional" Sabbath or holiday observance. The ascription of positive values to Hebrew or Yiddish or, for that matter, to anything Jewish *per se,* is a fallacy. Jewish social agencies are not "sectarian," since they are not religious. They are "non-sectarian" or secular.

With a friend like that, Jewish social work needs no enemies.

—MILTON HIMMELFARB

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

DENNIS H. WRONG has recently joined the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research.

MILTON HINDUS is professor of literature at Brandeis.

DAN JACOBSON's latest book is *No Further West,* an account of his travels in America.

E. F. SCHUMACHER is Economic Advisor to the National Coal Board in London.

HARRIS DIENSTFREY is an associate editor of COMMENTARY.

MILTON HIMMELFARB's column "In the Community" appears every fourth month in COMMENTARY.

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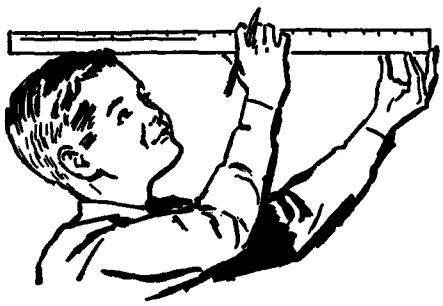
Let's Not Stop His Growth



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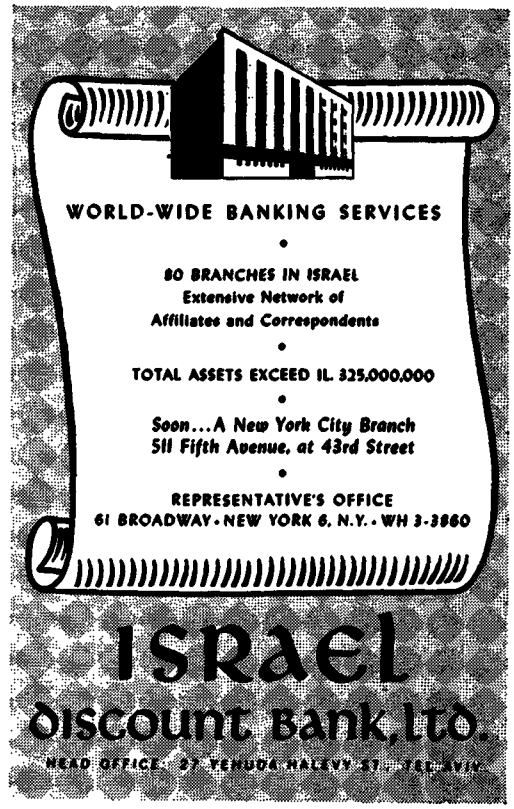
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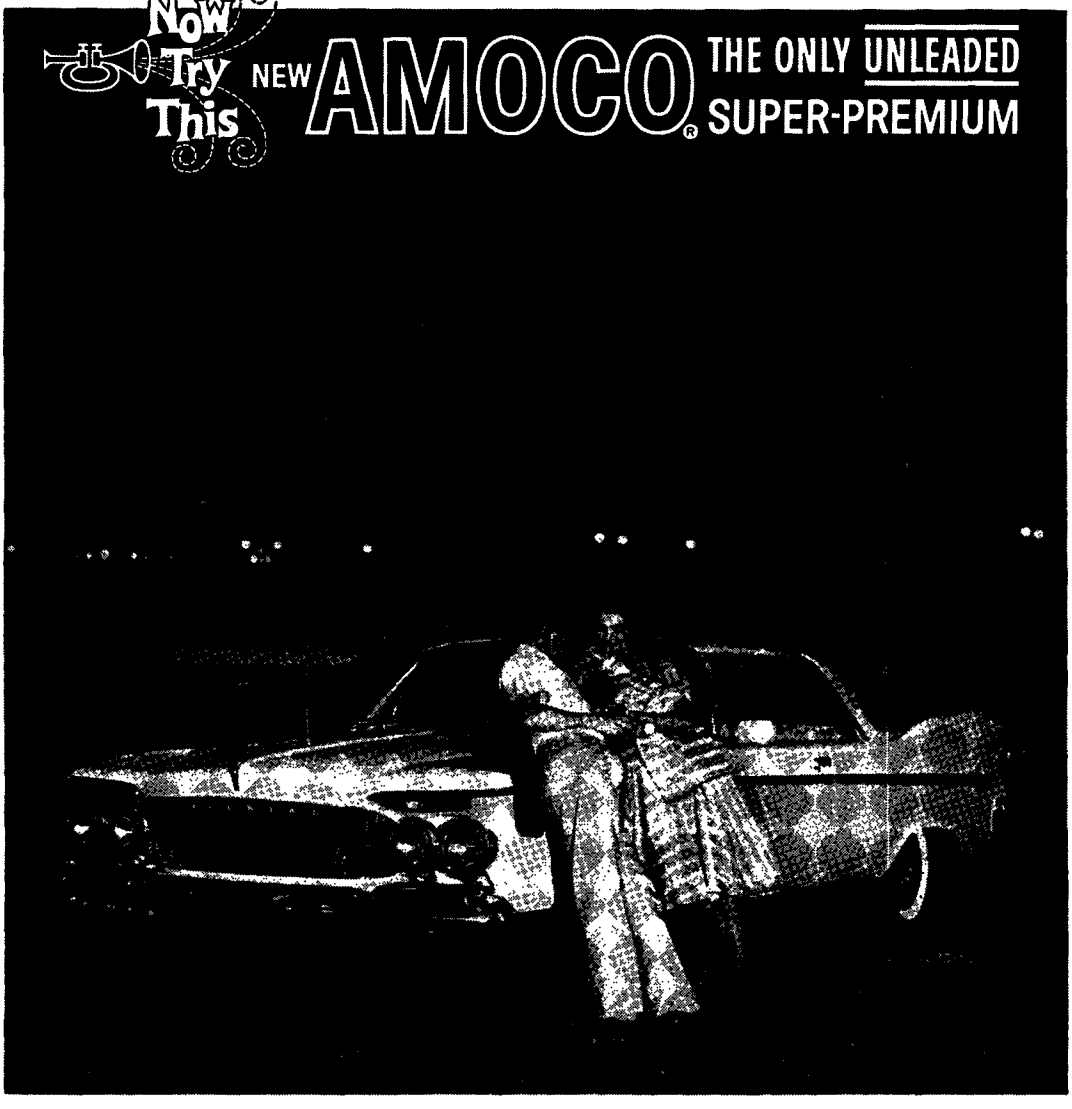

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